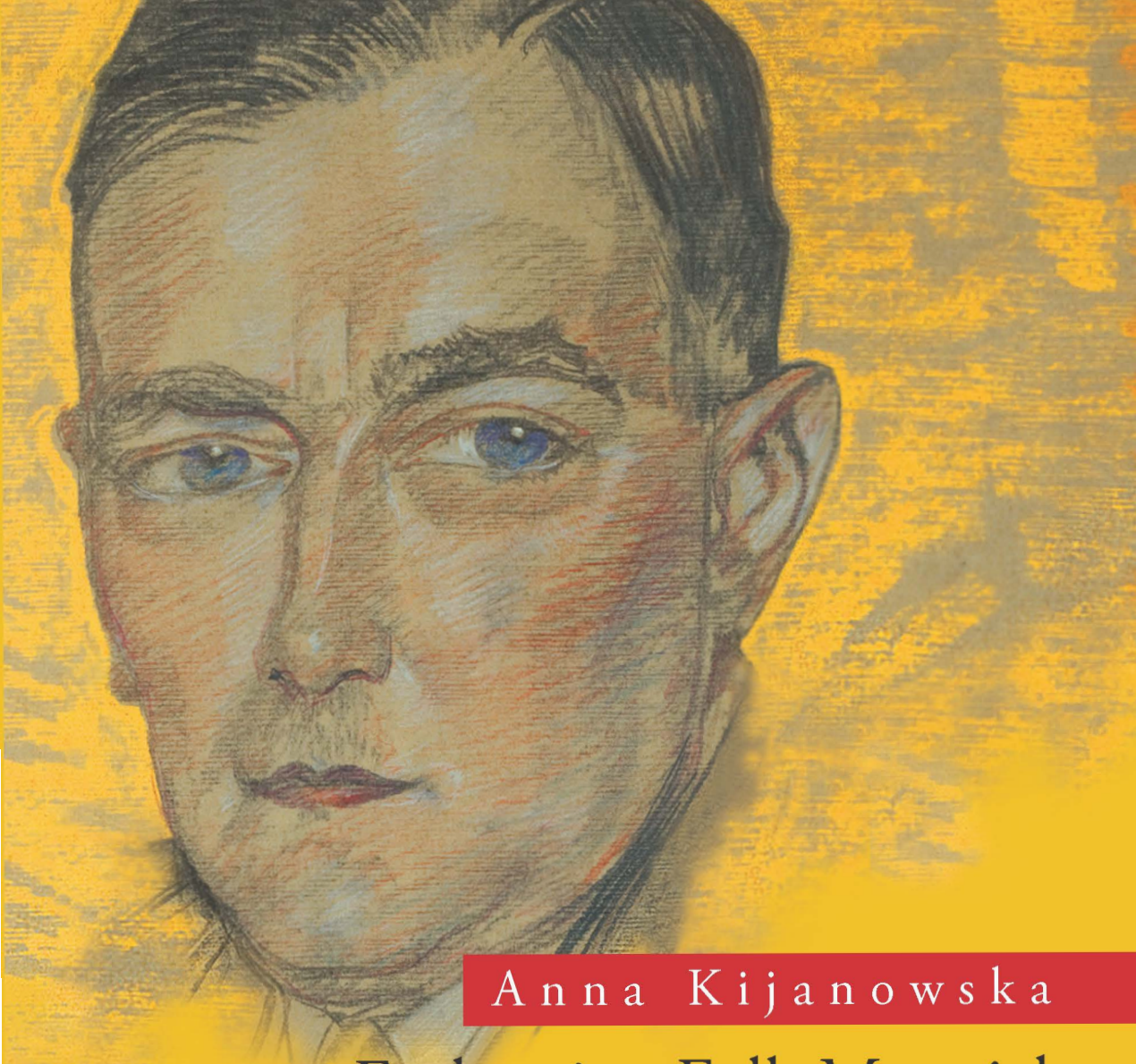

Anna Kijanowska

Embracing Folk Material and Finding the New Objectivity: Karol Szymanowski's Twenty Mazurkas Op. 50 and Two Mazurkas Op. 62

WYDAWNICTWO
UNIWERSYTETU ŚLĄSKIEGO

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Embracing Folk Material and Finding the New Objectivity: Karol Szymanowski's Twenty Mazurkas Op. 50 and Two Mazurkas Op. 62

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Preface

This book was inspired by my deep affection for Karol Szymanowski's music, the Góral – or Highlander – culture of the south, and the beauty of the Tatra Mountains which soar in the Podhale region of my native Poland.

As an active performer, I have faced criticism from teachers and fellow artists concerning my production of "harsh" sounds, my liberal approach to tempi, and my extensive use of *rubato* during my performances of Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*. This criticism arose from the mistaken belief that his compositions should be approached in the same way as Chopin's *Mazurkas*. This lack of knowledge about Góral culture, and in particular its music and character, became my motivation for choosing the subject of this dissertation. It is intended as a reminder that Karol Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* were predominantly inspired by Podhale folk music, that the compositions are a collection of various dances in a great variety of tempi, and that subsequently their interpretation should reflect the harsh and driven sounds that are found at the roots of Highland Góral music.

This book is dedicated to my daughter.

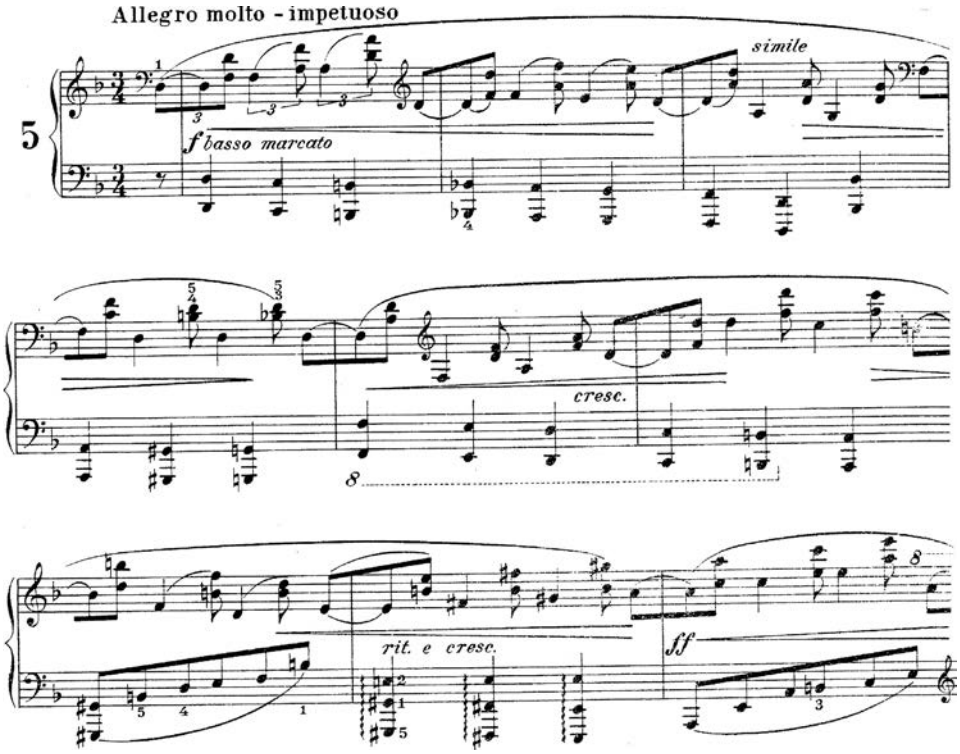
Chapter 1

Karol Szymanowski and the European Music of the 1920s

Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937) is the most noteworthy Polish composer after Chopin, and is considered the father of 20th-century Polish music. His musical output begins with a late-Romantic aesthetic inspired by Chopin in his opuses 1 through 26, absorbs impressionistic and exotic elements in opuses 29 to 42, and lands firmly at the New Objectivity period marked by a return to a Classical approach via folk material in his late works. The pronounced idiosyncrasies within the works of each period and a traceable "journey" in style are striking, as illustrated by three works, the *Preludes* op. 1, *Methopes* op. 34, and *Mazurkas* op. 50. A similar phenomenon can be observed in the output of other composers, most notably Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Hindemith, where complexity and experimental tendencies of one period give way to a more Classical and historically self-conscious approach in the subsequent period. The contrasts between Schoenberg's *Three Pieces* op. 11 and *Suite* op. 25, Stravinsky's *Petrushka* and *Serenade en la,* and Hindemith's *Suite 1922* and *Ludus Tonalis* immediately come to mind.

Szymanowski's early piano miniatures, *Preludes* op. 1 and *Etudes* op. 4, clearly reveal Chopin's influence in regard to texture, figuration, ornamentation, and the treatment of harmony. Additionally, Szymanowski's Classical approach to phrase structure also resembles the aesthetic evident in Chopin's early style.

Example 1. Prelude op. 1 no. 5



The Romanticism in Szymanowski's early style is rooted in and associated with the sweeping nationalism in European literature and poetry of that time. In Poland, the trend was embodied by the modernist Young Poland (*Młoda Polska*) movement, with Polish Messianism and the notion of "Art as Religion" at the forefront of the movement. According to Przybyszewski, one of the founders of the Young Poland group:

> Art has no aim, it is an aim in itself (. . .) it cannot serve any idea, it is dominant. Art stands above life, penetrates the essence of the universe. Art so conceived becomes the highest religion, and the artist becomes its priest.[1]

Szymanowski's contemporaries and friends, Kasprowicz, Iwaszkiewicz, and Miciński, were members of the Young Poland group, and their literary works served as inspiration for both his life and compositions.

[1] Czesław Miłosz, *The History of Polish Literature* (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1969), 330.

Opuses 29 through 42 are marked by Oriental influences picked up during Szymanowski's foreign travels in the years before World War I, mixed with an impressionistic approach to harmony and selective treatment of the orchestra. As Jim Samson notes,

> The material of these works was culled from a variety of 'exotic', notably from Greek and Oriental antiquity, and from Islamic cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean lands. Underlying these evocations was a dual impulse – a return to ancient cultural roots as a sane counterpart to our century's political and psychological traumas, and a parallel Nietzschean return to the 'vital life forces.' For Szymanowski musical composition was above all an opportunity to create allegorical words in which the imagined might become momentarily concrete.[2]

Ironically, these works were composed between 1914–1917, the years of World War I, while Szymanowski was in Tymoszówka and far away from the main events of the war. Like Debussy, and with similar lack of success, Szymanowski tried to withdraw from the world of war by burying himself in a fictional and abstract world created by his imagination. The *Love-songs of Hafiz* op. 26, *Symphony* no. 3, *Methopes* op. 29, and *Mythes* op. 30 are only a few examples of works from this period. As Palmer remarks,

> His music became more and more a matter of beauty of sound (. . .) which, exquisitely arranged and glorious to the ear, suggests wonderful and indefinable impressions. His sound world is totally distinctive: there is an exotic luxuriance, a sense of ecstasy and longing, a heightened awareness of color and glowing, an almost luminous orchestral texture.[3]

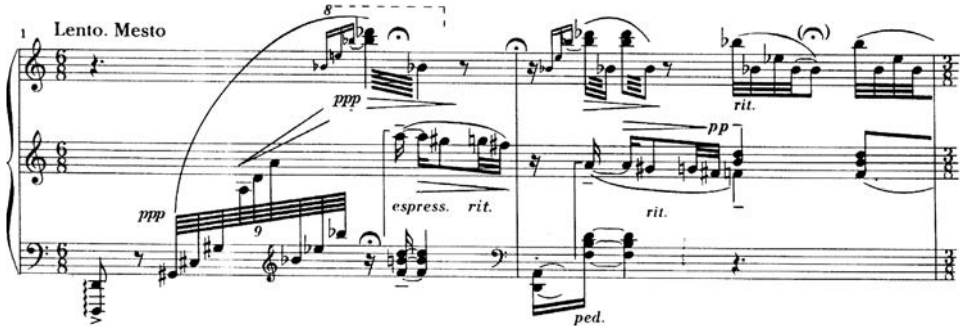
Remarkably, the textural dimension and complexity of his piano writing clearly show a drastic and abrupt change from his early miniatures. *Methopes* op. 29 demonstrates the tendency in the following way:

---

[2] Jim Samson, "Szymanowski and Polish Nationalism," *Musical Times*, March 1990, 129.

[3] Christopher Palmer, *BBC Music Guides: Szymanowski* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1983), cover page.

Example 2. *Methopes* op. 29, *Kalipso*



The cultural and artistic landscape of 1918 post-World War I was clearly shifting toward change. Post-Romanticism with its complex, highly chromatic, and expressionistic features was slowly being replaced with simplicity, clarity, and a dose of optimism. The search for the "new" and the trend "against the old" that marked the pre-war years was substituted with a tendency toward reconnecting with tradition and familiarity. Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Hindemith, among others, were at the center of creating this stylistic re-orientation, rooted deeply in tradition with respect to various elements of composition.

This resulted in the emergence of several trends during the 1920s, referred to today as *die Neue Sachlichkeit*, Neoclassicism, and Serialism. Although each of these threads displays different musical aesthetics, they share a common feature: the search for a renewed organization deeply rooted in tradition that could rebuild and "rediscover" pure music. The tendency was, not accidentally, a reaction to the complex and "text-dependent" music of the beginning of the 20th century. This was especially true in the case of Stravinsky, but even more so in Schoenberg's: opuses 15–22 are all staged works with the exception of *Five Orchestral Pieces* and *Six Little Pieces* op. 19. The turning point for Schoenberg came after he realized that there was no rational system at work in the creation of *Erwartung*; therefore he was not able either to explain or recapture the process in later works. As Charles Rosen notes, in *Erwartung*

> Schoenberg did away with all the traditional means in which music was supposed to make itself intelligible: repetition of themes, integrity and discursive transformation of clearly recognizable motifs, harmonic structure based on a framework of tonality.[4]

[4] Charles Rosen, *Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Frank Kermode (New York: The Viking Press, 1975), 39.

Clarifying further he writes,

> Schoenberg's most pressing concern, after World War I, was to return to the great central tradition of Western music.[5]

And to sum up,

> His aim was to integrate the advances of 1908–1913 with the inheritance of the eighteenth and nineteenth century.[6]

Schoenberg began to pursue a new, rational musical system and objectivity, which gave rise to Serialism. The 12-tone method was introduced for the first time and found its home in the traditional, "classical" forms of the Baroque suite and dance forms, which are based on symmetrical and logical complementary movements.

For Szymanowski, the post-World War I period signaled a renewal after stagnation and unhappiness in his professional life. In his letter of 1919 to Spiess and Ivanski he writes,

> (. . .) the situation is fatal – we are well, but there is absolutely no possibility of making any plans for the future (. . .) I snatch at any passing fragments of pleasure (. . .) and I rejoice in them, then I drink and somehow the time passes.[7]

It was the creation of the Polish State and a new freedom which brought a jolt of optimism and happiness in this dire time. He expressed it in the article "Fryderyk Chopin – mit o duszy polskiej" (Frédéric Chopin – The myth of the Polish soul):

> Flying over us unparalleled (. . .) historic events with dazzling and most joyful result in the form of the finally demolished gates of a century-and-a-half prison, dazzling sun of freedom (. . .) Today is the dawn of a new day full of heavy but joyful pains.[8]
> (Przelatujące nad nami bezprzykładne (. . .) zdarzenia dziejowe, których olśniewającym, najradośniejszym wynikiem są zburzone nareszcie wrota

[5] Rosen, *Schoenberg*, 70.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Karol Szymanowski, *Korespondencja* [Correspondence], ed. Teresa Chylińska, vol. 1 (Kraków: Musica Iagellonica, 1997), 570–571.

[8] Karol Szymanowski, "Fryderyk Chopin – mit o duszy polskiej" [Frédéric Chopin – The myth of the Polish soul], *Muzyka* 4–5 (1937): 43.

> półtorawiekowego więzienia, oślepiające słońce wolności (. . .) Dziś jest brzask nowego dnia, pełnego ciężkich, lecz radosnych trudów.)

As Hans Stuckenschmidt notes, Karol Szymanowski's

> (. . .) picture is compounded of refinement, nervous sensibility and inner restlessness (. . .) But it is that very restlessness which seems again and again to inflame this composer's imagination. It is as though with each work he had reached the limits of all that is attainable and conceivable, indeed the limits of his strangely individual technique (. . .) As a hedonist and a sensuous contemplator of intellectual joys, struggles, experiences and adventures – Szymanowski approaches the unfathomable nature of music, well knowing it to be unfathomable and for that very reason fascinated by it.[9]

While traveling quite extensively between the years 1918–1922, Szymanowski met Stravinsky in Paris and Bartók in New York and crystallized his point of view, expressing it through the principle character of his literary work, *Efebos*:

> The burning Fire in his soul adds a specific color to his 'faits et gestes.' With fanatical resolve he defends his only (freedom) which is absolute (freedom) to create. His personal tragedy is based on the fact that in a normal and freely developing country such encroachments on creativity are unthinkable, which with us was unfortunately a sad fact growing out of the historical tragedy of Poland, and expressing itself in 'national art' as the only manifestation of the internal strength of a brutally suffocated and enslaved nation.[10]

Consequently, Szymanowski pursued a new vision for his art and life. His new style and self-renewal were based upon the rediscovery of folk material and the emergence of the New Objectivity within his aesthetic world. He felt it was his mission to create a National Modern Style of Polish music after the hardships which followed the period of the occupation.

As Chybiński wrote in 1925:

> Szymanowski is of the opinion that it was Podhale which gave him the most real impulses to transform his style or, at least some of its elements.[11]

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[9] Hans H. Stuckenschmidt, "Karol Szymanowski," *Music and Letters* (January 1938): 36–47.

[10] Karol Szymanowski, *Pisma literackie* [Literary writings], ed. Teresa Chylińska, vol. 2 (Kraków: PWM, 1989), 128.

[11] Adolf Chybiński, "Mazurki fortepianowe K. Szymanowskiego" [Piano mazurkas by K. Szymanowski], *Muzyka*, no. 1 (1925): 13.

Undoubtedly, Szymanowski's immediate contact with Stravinsky's *Petrushka,* which he performed in a piano arrangement with Arthur Rubinstein in Tymoszówka in 1913, and *Le sacre du printemps* and *Les noces*, which he heard played by the composer upon his return from a trip to America in 1921, influenced Szymanowski profoundly. Stravinsky brought to his attention the possibility of using folk music in a new, modern way without Romantic sentimentality. Szymanowski discovered folk music at a time when Stravinsky was in the process of abandoning it. Although the composers manifested dramatically different relationships to folk music at that time, they were both in a process of exploring the parameters of instrumental music. For the Polish composer, folk music became a vehicle, "a new means" through which he found and expressed the New Objectivity and rediscovered "pure" music for himself, the same way Schoenberg rediscovered music through the new 12-tone system and "old" dance forms.

> Through the music not only of Stravinsky but also of Bartók, Szymanowski saw how it was possible to preserve the primitive and even barbaric elements of folk song and dance in a modern, non-academic but still tonal idiom.[12]

It is worth pointing out that the use of folk music by Szymanowski, Stravinsky, and Bartók was not at the heart of *die Neue Sachlichkeit* aesthetic but rather an afterthought inspired by the movement. Folk music became a vehicle of expression, an element of familiarity upon which new styles were created. Familiar tunes coupled with the simplicity of forms were the elements that drew composers to the new medium.

The political atmosphere of post-World War I Europe contributed in equal measure to composers' interest toward a "national" identity. As Chybiński wrote in 1925:

> Undoubtedly, some impulses of the rising 'music nationalism' in Europe (maybe following the example of France and Russia) that also found proper expression in Spain and even England made everybody think. People had enough of 'music exoticism' although it was this exoticism that became the platform to 'nationalism.'[13]

The new path in the music of the 1920s, linking tradition with folk music, was strengthened by the re-establishment of countries, many of which regained

[12] Palmer, *Szymanowski*, 36.
[13] Chybiński, "Mazurki fortepianowe," 13.

their freedom after World War I. These countries were seeking their national identity and new ways in which to prove their distinctiveness, while at the same time trying not to lose connections with contemporary trends. Bartók in Hungary, Manuel de Falla in Spain, Leoš Janáček in Czechoslovakia, and Szymanowski in Poland were the leaders of the new "folkloristic" trend. This is how Janáček understood the importance of folk music:

> Folk-song is a unity: it is the expression of men who know only the culture of Good, not an alien, inflicted culture. I believe that a time will come when all art music will spring from a common folk source, when we shall embrace each other in these created works by the shared experience of folk-song. Folk-song binds together all mankind in one spirit, one happiness, one salvation.[14]

Szymanowski's shift in style and his new direction in music blossomed around 1920, along with the rediscovery of traditional and "classical" forms in European music. Despite Igor Stravinsky's abandonment of folk-based music, Szymanowski's aesthetics, if not his materials, were close to the Russian composer's, who summarized his viewpoint in *Poetics of Music*[15]:

> A real tradition is not the relic of a past that is irretrievably gone; it is a living force that animates and informs the present (. . .) everything which is not tradition is plagiarism (. . .) Tradition assures the continuity of creation.

Overall, Szymanowski's approach to folk music is closer to Bartók's, who in his *Essays* points out a close relationship between tradition and folk music:

> Every artist has the right to sink roots in the art of the past. It is not only his right, but also his duty. Why should we then not have the right to regard folk-art as such a rooting ground?[16]

And further,

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[14] Leon Janáček, in *Twentieth Century Music* by Hans Stuckenschmidt (New York: Mc-Graw Hill Book Comp., 1969), 158.

[15] Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1977), 57.

[16] Béla Bartók, "On the Significance of Folk Music." In Béla Bartók *Essays*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff (London: Faber & Faber, 1976), 346, as quoted in Martha M. Hyde, "Neoclassic and Anachronistic Impulses in Twentieth-Century Music," in *Music Theory Spectrum* (autumn 1996): 214.

> Every single (authentic) melody of the peasant music (. . .) is perfection itself – a classical example of how the musical thought can be expressed in the most ideal manner with the simplest means and in the most finished form.[17]

For Szymanowski, Zakopane and Podhale folk music became the source of his New Objectivity and inspiration, which allowed him to reach his goal of carrying the influence of Polish music beyond its geographical borders. He also found personal contentment and a safe, secluded asylum for his art and life in Zakopane. *Słopiewnie*, *Harnasie*, the *Mazurkas* of op. 50, along with *Stabat Mater* and *Symphony Concertante* were written under the influence of the Podhale culture. As he wrote to Jachimecki:

> I am concerned, myself, with crystallizing elements of tribal heritage.[18]

And as Szymanowski once confessed to Michał Choromański:

> I want this drunken and impressive song of a ringleader (. . .) to become understood in my interpretation and perhaps become close and beautiful to each "good European."[19]
> (Chcę, aby ta pijana i przejmująca piosenka harnasia (. . .) stała się w mojej interpretacji zrozumiała, a może nawet bliska i piękna dla każdego „dobrego Europejczyka.")

It is remarkable that his "new discovery" found a clear connection with Polish tradition and folk music. As Barrody-Szymanowski remarked:

> His opus 50 *Mazurkas* carried on Chopin's ideal of enriching the artistic vocabulary from the sources of the folk art.[20]

I would like to emphasize the importance of folk music in Szymanowski, which enabled him to reach a new milestone in European music based on the clarification and reduction of means, concurrently with nationalistic trends. It is interesting that nationalism was taking hold in France as early as 1918, when

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[17] Bela Bartók, "Hungarian Peasant Music," 270, as quoted in Hyde "Neoclassic Impulses," *Music Theory Spectrum* (autumn 1996): 215.

[18] Palmer, *Szymanowski*, 16.

[19] Karol Szymanowski, "Karol Szymanowski" by Michal Choromański, in *Writings I* [in Polish], ed. Kornel Michałowski (Kraków: PWM, 1984), 422.

[20] Alan Barrody-Szymanowski, "Szymanowski: Creator of Polish Impressionism," *Music Journal* (July 1973): 102.

Cocteau declared war against German Romanticism and the Impressionism of Debussy while calling for "more French music." In his *Le Coq et l'Arlequin* he strives for art which would be:

> Clean and more temperate (. . .) and if necessary more brutal and (. . .) more French.

He says the following:

> Enough of clouds, waves, water colors, nymphs and scents of the night (…) we need music on the earth, music for every day.[21]

Thomas Mann expressed similar concerns in Germany as early as 1911 in an article published in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*[22] where he shared his vision for modern music. According to Mann, music was even then moving toward a more logical and clearer form, and he declared confidently,

> the new Classicism is coming.

This new Classicism is known today as *die Neue Sachlichkeit*. Viennese composers were also on the lookout for something "new" after the depletion of post-Romantic chromaticism and the literary forms of these expressionistic trends. This was reflected in Schoenberg's discovery of the 12-tone system, which for the first time was consistently presented in his *Suite* op. 25 of 1921–1923.

To sum up, European music of the 1920s clearly shows a tendency toward a pursuit of the New Objectivity, which sprung from various sources and took of a myriad of forms through the pens of different composers. For Szymanowski, folk music carved out a new path in music and offered "a new clarity" in form as well as a new medium for subject matter. Undoubtedly, many composers of the 1920s searched for an escape from the traumas of World War I, the complexities of expressionism, and music based on literary works. Instead, they began leaning toward simplicity, "pure music" and "New Optimism." The two most discernible trends of the 1920s, Neoclassicism and the New Objectivity, share common ground, and they shall be the focus of the next chapter.

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[21] Zofia Helman, *Neoklasycysm w muzyce polskiej* [Neoclassicism in Polish music] (Kraków: PWM, 1986), 29, as quoted in Chylińska, *Karol Szymanowski: His Life and Works* (Los Angeles: Polish Music History Series USC, 1993), 151–152.

[22] Helman, *Neoklasycyzm*, 28.

Chapter 2

Die Neue Sachlichkeit: Hindemith, Stravinsky, Schoenberg

The term *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) first came up in 1923 in connection with a post-Expressionistic exhibition dedicated to works by G.F. Hartlaub. Shortly thereafter, Ernst Krenek described the New Objectivity as a reaction against Expressionism and explained its main aspiration: to reach a wider audience by incorporating "familiar" elements into music.

> *Die Neue Sachlichkeit* was primarily defined by the musician's search for a broader basis of operation, and was characterized by the absence of complexity and by an element of familiarity in both the subject and means of expression.[1]

The New Objectivity followed in the wake of the revolutionary and futuristic achievements of the Expressionists, Impressionists, and Dadaists, and quickly began distancing itself from these movements. Moving away from literary works and other extra-musical connotations, *Neue Sachlichkeit* compositions were instead designed as strictly absolute, "pure" music. Perceptively, Debussy had already shifted his interest towards absolute music and French tradition as early as 1915, as a letter to Stravinsky testifies:

> I've been able to think in music once again (. . .) I have actually written nothing except 'pure' music: twelve *Etudes* for piano, two sonatas for various

[1] Nils Grosh, "Neue Sachlichkleit," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, 29 vols. (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 17: 781.

> instruments, in the old French style which was kind enough not to ask for tetralogical efforts from its listeners.[2]

The allure of the New Objectivity was also evident in the music of another famous French composer, Maurice Ravel. His *Tombeau de Couperin* is dramatically different from his impressionistic masterpieces, *Gaspard de la nuit* and *Daphnis and Chloé,* and shows a clear change in style and a return toward Classical traditions.

Die Neue Sachlichkeit made great use of Classical dance forms, jazz, and folk idioms, all widely familiar and therefore recognizable to the general populace. The newly emerging Neoclassical tendencies of the 1920s overlapped with and were assimilated into the New Objectivity, and although Hindemith, Stravinsky, and Schoenberg were not immediately associated with the movement, their music from this period reflects the "new" approach quite distinctly as they turned to Classical traditions.

While the expression of Classicism reveals itself uniquely in Hindemith's, Stravinsky's and Schoenberg's music, certain common characteristics emerge: the manifestation of Classical forms and abstract subject matter in Schoenberg's *Suite* op. 25 and Stravinsky's *Serenade en la,* and a novel reinterpretation of linear, polyphonic texture in Hindemith's *Ludus tonalis.* Szymanowski implemented *die Neue Sachlichkeit* in his works by filling Classical forms with familiar material: folk music. While not everyone may agree that Schoenberg is a true representative of *die Neue Sachlichkeit* ideals, I would like to emphasize that this term acknowledges primarily the clear presence of the Classical tradition as it applies to various elements within compositions. It should not be understood as a mere simplification of those elements. As Hans Mersmann wrote in an article titled "Neue Musik"[3] in 1927, he perceived the music of the 1920s to be divided into two trends: one represented by Stravinsky, Hindemith, Krenek, Bartók, and Milhaud, the second defined by the Second Viennese School. He considered *die Neue Sachlichkeit* a synthesis of the two.

The search for a new means of organization in music among the Second Viennese School composers became evident in their use of Classical forms and a determined move toward Neoclassicism. Schoenberg's *Suite* op. 25 demonstrates this principle clearly. As Rosen observes:

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[2] Claude Debussy, *Debussy Letters*, eds. François Lesure, Roger Nichole (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Pres, 1987), 309.

[3] In Zofia Helman, *Neoklasycyzm w muzyce polskiej XX wieku.* [Neoclassicism in the 20th-century Polish Music.] (Kraków: PWM, 1985), 216.

> If serialism was to be not a break with tradition, but a bridge from the incontrovertible accomplishments of the great atonal period into the center of history once again, it was important in this first completely serial work to demonstrate how it could deal with the basic classical forms: the final proof was to be in the facility and charm with which these forms were reanimated.[4]

Schoenberg composed the suite in two sessions: starting in 1921 he wrote the *Prelude* and a portion of the *Intermezzo,* followed by another sitting in 1923 when he reworked the entire concept of the suite to reflect a traditional Baroque setting. He added four traditional Baroque dances, the *Gavotte, Minuet and Trio, Musette*, and *Gigue,* unified by and based upon the same twelve-tone series. Schoenberg's use of a dance form in *Suite* op. 25 is remarkable, clearly demonstrating his gravitation toward a Classical aesthetic. The *Minuet* stands out as an example of rounded binary form with perfect Classical proportions (16 + 16 measures), with the return of the prime form of the row in measure 17 becoming analogous to the more traditional tonal means of establishing a rounded binary form.

The example illustrates well that Schoenberg's 12-tone method was a continuation of tradition rather than a break from it. As Rosen writes:

> Serialism appeared to realize an old dream of classical musical aesthetics: the reconciliation of unity and diversity.[5]

> The invention of serialism was specifically a move to resurrect an old classicism as well as to make a new step possible. Moreover, serialism developed step by step from some of the most traditional features of Western music.[6]

One major aspect of *die Neue Sachlichkeit* was to make music more accessible for listeners. By incorporating familiar idioms, it came very close to the purpose of Hindemith's *Gebrauchsmusik*. Although *Gebrauchsmusik* belongs to neither the Neoclassical nor the New Objectivity trend, it shares common features with both: an anti-Romanticism and a tendency toward simpler forms. The New Objectivity in Hindemith's music is manifested through the use of Baroque forms (prelude and fugue), and polyphonic techniques in *Ludus Tonalis.*

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[4] Charles Rosen, *Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Frank Kermode (New York: The Viking Press, 1975), 79.

[5] Rosen, *Schoenberg*, 96.

[6] Ibid., 73.

The incorporation of American dance rhythms, familiar and popular in Europe at the time, within the Baroque form of the *Piano Suite* (1922), unquestionably represents the New Objectivity. Hindemith's compositions from the 1920s reveal the composer's shift in interest toward polyphonic and melodic writing, as well as Classical and Baroque instrumental forms; overall, they are evolutionary in their intent and style.

Stravinsky, who spent the 1920s in Paris, was widely criticized for his interest and extended use of "old" music in his new compositions. Yet he was undeniably a master at synthesizing tradition and modernism. Stravinsky's music of the 1920s is related to, or at least inspired by, a multitude of styles and composers, from Bach in his *Piano Concerto* and *Piano Sonata* (1924), to Pergolesi in his *Pulcinella.* Everything, whether it was the musical style of a particular composer, a Baroque form, or a page of mythological or liturgical text, could be used as the foundation for his "new style." *Serenade en la* alludes to a practice from another era, and evokes the idea of quaint evening music, played outdoors. Stravinsky ingeniously managed to adopt Classical forms, styles or subject matter from the past, while capturing the spirit of the particular period. In the *Serenade* and *Octet,* he limits dynamic indications to *piano* and *forte* only, achieving the effect of Baroque terraced dynamics. By

> treating tonality as if it were an archaic and foreign language, [Stravinsky] created a genuine and viable neoclassical style *en grand seigneur:* he used non chromatic tonal relations ruthlessly, disrupting both their harmonic and rhythmic aspects, and made no attempt to create effects of nostalgia or respectability.[7]

The *Piano Sonata* demonstrates this principle clearly. The opening alternates the tonic and dominant function with non-corresponding harmonization (tonic with dominant, dominant with tonic), creating a new harmonic field in which the traditional tonal hierarchy and order gradually disappear.

> Stravinsky's great Neoclassical works of the 1920s and 1930s do not rely on the traditional language of tonality; they use and exploit the elements of tonality according to an elegant set of new rules.[8]

Szymanowski was familiar with the new trends and concepts of his times. Although he did not consider himself to be among the modern trendsetters, he

[7] Ibid., 71.
[8] Ibid., 72.

acknowledged their contributions and was influenced by them. In the article "On Romanticism in Music," he describes *die Neue Sachlichkeit* as a modern, anti-Romantic trend in music, which could be understood in two ways:

> as application of art to the flatness of today, or as the aspiration toward the absolute and super-epochal value of a piece of art.[9]

Szymanowski's music reflects the second tendency. He embraced the new trends in culture and music and agreed that music should aim to reach a wider audience through grassroots elements such as folk music. He elaborated on this point further in an article from 1925:

> Contemporary music tries to reach the masses, it goes towards the ground, good, healthy soil (. . .).[10]
> (Dzisiejsza muzyka schodzi ku ludziom, ku ziemi, ku żyznej płodnej glebie.)

In Szymanowski's music, the New Objectivity is most evident in his *Mazurkas*. The familiarity of the musical material and the media of folk music, Classical dance forms, homophonic textures, Classical proportions, and rhythmic unification using irregular accents typical of Podhale folk music are all at work there. As Chybiński observes, Szymanowski

> was constantly charmed by that music form, which gave him the possibility to express himself in small forms, but in such varied ways. There are no fundamental similarities among them: each of them has different physiognomy, even when two or four are concerned with the same topic. Some harmonic means or even a picture of motives (leaving aside clear rhythmic similarity but with an incredibly rich rhythmic pulse in general) may create an impression of identity. The external form (a normal three-part structure) may even be common to all mazurkas (. . .) But each mazurka is an expression of different content or, as one might say, of a different mood. If the mood is similar or even identical, then its expression is reached with the help of a different method. In short, there is a great variety of ideological inventiveness in its expression.[11]

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[9] Karol Szymanowski, "O romantyzmie w muzyce" [On Romanticism in music], *Pisma muzyczne* [Musical writings], ed. Kornel Michałowski, vol. 1 (Kraków: PWM, 1984), 247.

[10] Karol Szymanowski, "Zagadnienie 'ludowości' w stosunku do muzyki współczesnej" [The subject of 'folklore' in reference to contemporary music], *Muzyka*, no. 10 (1925), in *Z pism*, 83.

[11] Adolf Chybiński, "Mazurki fortepianowe K. Szymanowskiego" [Piano mazurkas by K. Szymanowski], *Muzyka*, no. 1 (1925): 12.

For Szymanowski, the mazurka genre became the mechanism through which he renewed the tradition of the Polish dance and found the "universal and timeless value of the art." Interestingly enough, an idea similar to the symmetrical phrase structure and formal proportions found in the B section of the *Minuet* from Schoenberg's *Suite* op. 25 can be observed in Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* op. 50 no. 1. Measures 1–16 consist of four four-measure phrases and the ternary form is built on a 16 + 20 + 16 measure scheme. *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 2, alternatively, is a rondo form with four distinctive sections, consisting of 28 : 26 : 28 : 26 measures, respectively. To compare, one cannot find similar Classical proportions and symmetrical phrase structures in Szymanowski's works from his middle period, to take *Methopes* op. 29 or *Masks* op. 34 as two examples. Neither can one find linear texture or simplicity. On the contrary, textural appurtenances and irregular phrase construction are more characteristic of the works of that period.

The remainder of this book will explore all of the above-mentioned aspects of *die Neue Sachlichkeit* and their presence in Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* op. 50 and 62. It will not delve into an analysis of their tonal system, a topic covered extensively in Ann Kossakowski's[12] research based on a Schenkerian analysis and set theory.

[12] Ann Louise Kossakowski, "Karol Szymanowski's Mazurkas: Cyclic Structure and Harmonic Language," unpublished Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1980.

Chapter 3

The Folk Music of Poland

The Polish State was created in the second half of the 10th century by

> tribes, which shared a fundamentally common culture and language and were considerably more closely related to one another than were the Germanic tribes.[1]

Nonetheless, socio-geographical idiosyncrasies were still discernible among much of the Polish population. As Czekanowska notes:

> The people from the open country of lowlands communicated and behaved differently from the forest-, marsh-, or mountain-dwellers.[2]

These different behaviors greatly affected local economies and means of transportation. Farming and cattle breeding were most prominent in the lowland region, whereas sheep and cattle farming dominated the highlands.

> Moreover, people from isolated enclaves and scattered settlements displayed a mentality and sensitivity different from that of the inhabitants of crowded villages. The people (. . .) from the mountains and the forest were long accustomed to greater space, in all aspects of their lives, and they seem to have felt a greater need for freedom.[3]

The geographical, sociological, and ethnic histories of Poland should be taken into careful consideration, for despite its diverse origins, the population tends to be very homogeneous. The folk music of Poland, on the other hand,

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[1] E. Lippman, in Anna Czekanowska, *Polish Folk Music* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990), 3.

[2] Czekanowska, *Polish Folk Music*, 8.

[3] Ibid.

is heterogeneous and represents one of the most fascinating phenomena in European culture. As Czekanowska writes:

> It should be pointed out that the most characteristic features of Polish folk music seem to be rooted in the patterns of accentuation and phrasing of the spoken Polish language, and in the basic patterns of movement and communication. Recently this pattern has clearly been articulated by paroxytonic stress, accompanied by the musical phenomenon of syncopation. The musical pattern indicated is additionally reshaped by a tendency to shift the accents within a phrase by *tempo rubato*.[4]

In addition:

> Polish folk music structure has a definite downbeat and a falling sequence of rhythmic phrase which distinguished it from western and central European structures (. . .) Unlike most European languages, the Polish language does not stress the differences between accented and non-accented syllables, and it is governed by strong syllabism. A correspondence between the sequence of syllables and their time units is strictly preserved. In the final result, the system has more quantitative than qualitative character; and the rhythmic motifs are structurally fixed in the frame of the bars, starting on the strong beats and finishing on the weak. Most characteristic, however, is the tendency to divide the narration into equal time units while groups of language accents preserve a similar quantity.[5]

Mirroring the economic regions, Polish folk music also falls into one of two geographical areas, lowland or highland. Each region bears unique and distinctive features, but the major characteristic that distinguishes the music of these two traditions is metric structure. It is significant that the majority of folk music from the lowland region is in triple meter, while the music of the highlanders is almost exclusively duple.

A. Lowland Region

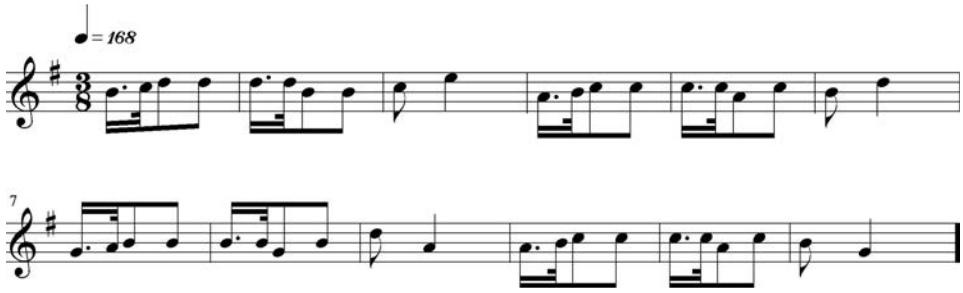
The lowland region is represented by Greater Poland (Wielkopolska), Silesia (Śląsk), Pomerania (Pomorze), and Mazovia (Mazowsze). While it is far beyond the scope of this dissertation to address all the characteristics of these individu-

[4] Ibid., 109.
[5] Ibid., 193.

al areas, it is necessary to discuss the major dance forms common to the entire region. These dances were first stylized by Chopin and subsequently strongly influenced Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*.

Kujawiak, *Mazur*, and *Oberek* are the three major folk dances of Polish lowland music and are all present in their formalized versions in Chopin's *Mazurkas*. The central characteristics of these dances are their rhythms, known as "Mazurkowe" rhythms, and a consistent triple meter (3/4 or 3/8 time).

E x a m p l e 3. *Mazurka* rhythms. Kwaśnicowa, p. 11, folk *Mazurka*

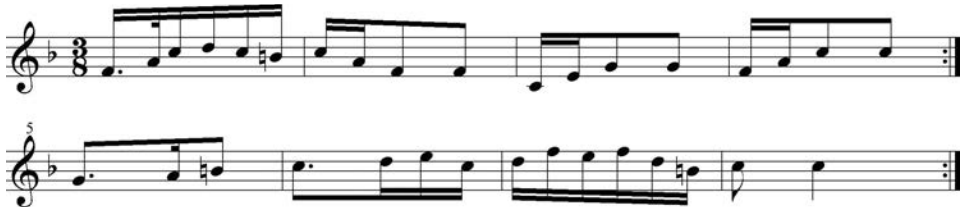


Known as a "turning couple dance," the *Mazur*, or *Mazurek*, is the oldest and most popular dance of the lowland region. It has been in existence since the 15th century, and has been notated since the 16h century.

The *Mazur* is named for its region of origin, *Mazowsze*. The name "Mazur" was mistakenly adopted outside of Poland in its incorrect version *Mazurka* meaning "a female from the Mazowsze region," not "a dance."[6] By the 17th century, this dance had become very popular and was widely adopted at the courts. Memorably, it was a march based on the folk *Mazurek* that Józef Wybicki composed in the 18th century to boost the morale of the Polish region as it was battling under Napoleon Bonaparte. The composition was adopted as Poland's national anthem in 1926. Today, the *Mazurek* is considered the national dance of Poland.

[6] Marian i Jadwiga Sobiescy, *Polska muzyka ludowa.* [Polish folk music.] (Kraków: PWM, 1973), 389.

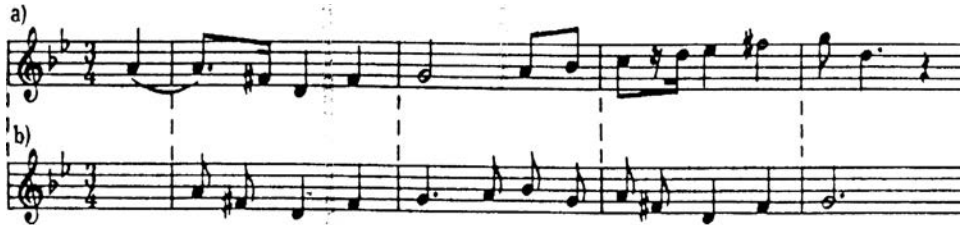
E x a m p l e 4. *Early Mazurka* Kolberg, *Mazowsze II, Nuta* no. 433, p. 73



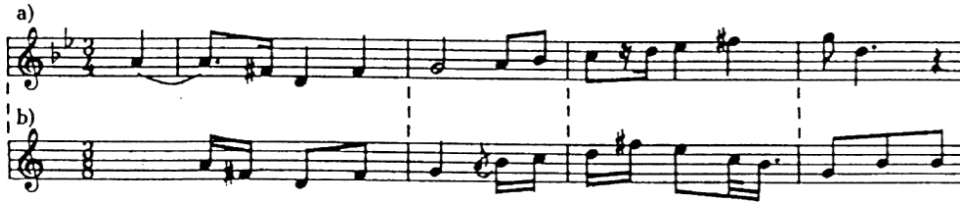
Chopin was the first composer who plucked the folk *Mazur* from little villages and planted it in the artistic salons and public concert halls of the cities. His *Mazurkas* are a stylization of lowland folk music rather than an exact adaptation. The Sobieskis (Sobiescy) found the following folk genre in Chopin's *Mazurka* op. 24 no. 1.

E x a m p l e 5A and 5B. Sobiescy (Example 250 and 251)

A. a) Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 24 no. 1
   b) Kolberg, *Od Czerska Pieśni ludu polskiego* Vol.1 (Folk songs of the Polish people), 1857 no. 313



B. a) Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 24 no. 1
   b) Kolberg, *Od Kruszwicy (Polonowice) Pieśni ludu polskiego* Vol. 4 (Folk songs of the Polish people), *Kujawy II.* 1867 no. 451



While outlining the mazurka's characteristics, it is also worth mentioning that the executions of the mazurka's dance steps exclude a fast tempo. The variable

accents, which usually fall on the last part of the measure but may also fall anywhere, embody the most crucial feature of the dance. Typically, the phrases end with a characteristic accented note on a weak beat:

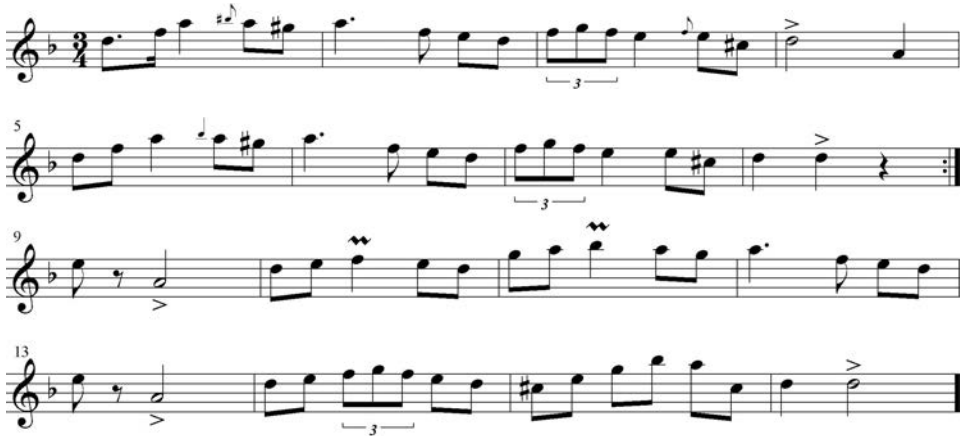
Example 6. Sobiescy, p. 393

> One must remember that the *Mazur* may be danced in several styles: either as a ballroom dance, as a performing dance of a folk dance ensemble, or as a ballet.[7]

Ada Dziewanowska supplies detailed descriptions of the dance steps in *Polish Folk Dances and Songs: A Step-by-Step Guide*.

The *Kujawiak* is slower and more lyrical than the *Mazur*, and is a turning couples dance. The *Kujawiak,* often written in a minor mode, differs from the *Mazur* or *Oberek* not only because of its lyrical, more romantic quality, but also by virtue of the *rubato* tempo and *ritardando* endings.

Example 7. Kaczyński



Although the rhythmic structure of the *Kujawiak* can vary, the following patterns begin to emerge:

[7] Ada Dziewanowska, *Polish Folk Dances and Songs: A Step-by-Step Guide* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1997), 518.

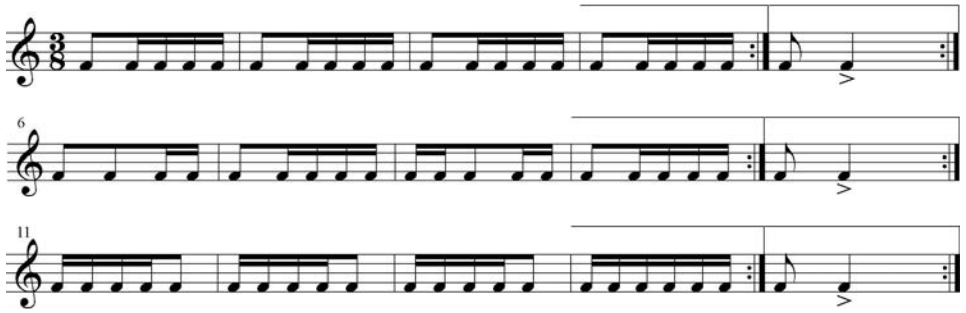
Example 8. Sobiescy, p. 392

Unlike the *Mazurek,* the *Kujawiak* dance does not require jumping and leg kicks from its performers, and is based on a rather simple rhythmic structure.

The *Oberek* is the most exuberant, vigorous, noisy, and fiery of the lowland dances. It is usually written in 3/8 time and consists of a four- or eight-measure phrase structure. The term itself is derived from the verb *obracać się,* which means to turn or to spin oneself, and there is a tendency to gradually accelerate the tempo of the dance.

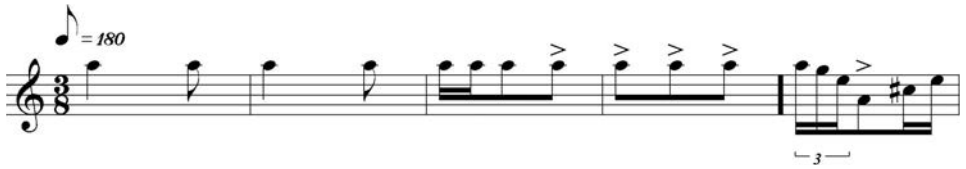
Unlike the *Mazur* or *Kujawiak*, the *Oberek* is the only dance that does not appear in vocal music and is clearly an instrumental genre. It is also considered to be the dance in which the authentic elements of a peasant dance are the most clearly preserved. The rhythmic structure of the *Oberek* dance very often contains the following rhythmic patterns:

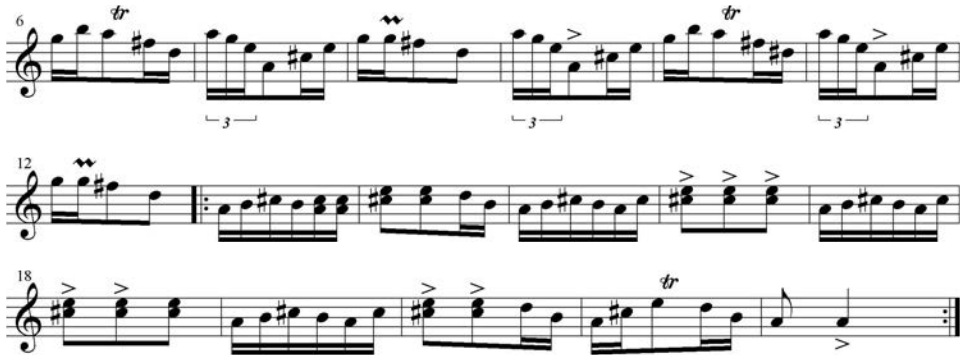
Example 9. Sobiescy, p. 397



Frequently, the *Oberek* dance is preceded by a four-measure introduction:

Example 10. *Oberek*, Sobiescy, p. 398 (Example 231)





B. Highland Region

The discussion of the highland region will be focused primarily on the Podhale region and its characteristics. The Podhale region lies in the shadow of the highest elevation of the Sudeten-Carpathian range on the southern border of Poland, and its name translates as "below mountain pastures." The people of Podhale are called *górale* (singular: *góral*), and they are known for their purity of spirit, distinctive individuality and thirst for independence. As Czekanowska notes:

> None of the Polish territories presents such a close ethnic entity as the mountain region of Podhale. In the Podhale region the folk culture still retains a fresh power and creativity, which defends itself successfully against any standardizing trends. This is a consequence of the function of the music in the life of the ethnic group, and of the strong sense of ethnocentricity among the inhabitants. The distinctive character of Podhale can be explained by the isolation of the people living in the highest mountain areas, and by their loyalty to the traditional work of the shepherd.[8]

Nowadays the isolation and unstained culture of Podhale is less a reality than during Szymanowski's lifetime. However, some aspects of the original Podhale folk culture still remain alive today. The majority of the Podhale population, *górale,* continue to hand-build wooden houses in the old style, with ornamentation consisting of interior woodcarvings. They continue shepherding, and often wear their traditional attire. Traditional folk music remains a staple at weddings and other special occasions, albeit not in its purest form as heard

[8] Anna Czekanowska, *Polish Folk Dances* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 84.

at the beginning of the 20th century. *Górale* still continue to speak in their old Podhale dialect called *gwara*. It differs dramatically from literary Polish, and is often not understood by lowland Poles because of its inherited foreign influences (Wallachian, Rumanian, and Hungarian) that did not reach other regions of the country.

Additionally, in *gwara*, the shifting of stress from the penultimate syllable (as it is in literary Polish), to the first syllable creates a different "rhythmic" feel and brings a special kind of dance-like lilt to the language. This shifting of accent coupled with a special "softening" in the means of pronunciation (in which the 'sz' and 'cz' sounds are reduced to just 's' or 'c') create a new manner of speech, identified by outsiders as *gwara*.

The music of Podhale also differs strikingly from that of other regions. The most obvious differences are the duple meter and the characteristic vocal performance style: male voices sing in a loud high-pitched tone, sometimes singing falsetto along with female voices. This highly distinctive technique, utilized mostly in multi-part singing, has a harsh, raw timbre, which sometimes makes a strange impression on outsiders who often interpret Highlander singing as shouting. As Dziewanowska writes:

> It is the ambition of every male singer to reach the highest possible note.[9]

One might speculate if this performance practice has its roots in *gwara* itself, where the "lower" and "smoother" sounds of 'sz' and 'cz' are replaced with 's' and 'c', making the dialect sound harsher and "higher" in timbre. Another peculiarity of this style is that frequently a solo singer begins each stanza, to be joined after two or three measures by others in a free harmonization. All participants end in unison.

As Karol Szymanowski wrote in his preface to a collection of pieces of Podhale music collected and transcribed by Mierczyński:

> Either one understands *góral* dance music and has a feeling for it by way of, so to say, mysterious instinct of race: then one loves it, yearns for its vigor, pulsating with a rapture latent in its rugged, angular form, seemingly fashioned from stone. Or else one does not understand it (. . .) and then one cannot bear it.[10]

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[9] Dziewanowska, *Polish Folk Dances and Songs*, 270.

[10] Karol Szymanowski, *Pisma muzyczne* [Musical writings], ed. Kornel Michałowski, vol. 1, (Kraków: PWM, 1984), 251–252.

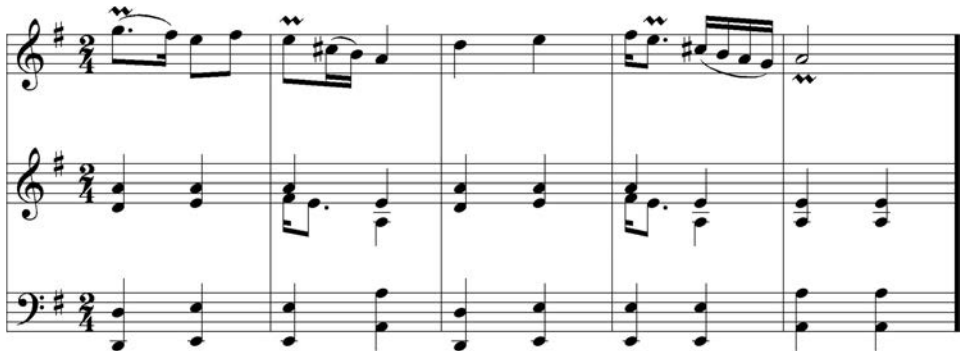
He also discussed the Podhale musical structure, dictated by the *górale*'s affinity for shape and formal construction:

> Undoubtedly *góral* dance and music are a symptom of the customs of *góral* life; melodic core being a rhythmically re-organized, but in essence 'singable' song. It is striking however, that both their dance and music transcend those customs thanks to their formal values (. . .) Each *Krzesany* or *Zbójnicki* is vigorously shaped and formulated within a vivid framework embracing not only melody and rhythm, but also a full, characteristic harmony (. . .) Only when one comprehends the *górale*'s passion for investing artistic shapes on everything which surrounds them, only when one penetrates these (. . .) forms, will one perceive in this music the true face of the unyielding, hard, specifically *góral* 'lyricism'.[11]

The music of the Highlanders may be categorized into several types of melodies and a couple of dances.

The *Sabała Melody* is one of the most famous Polish melodies, and one that has inspired many artists: Szymanowski in *Harnasie* and *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 1; the Nobel Prize-winning novelist Henryk Sienkiewicz in *Sabałowa Bajka* (Sabała's fairy tale); and the painter, Stanisław Witkiewicz. The *Sabała Melody* was named in memory of the famous mountaineer, fiddler and singer, Jan Krzeptowski, nicknamed *Sabała.* Today, the Krzeptowski family still resides in Podhale, where they can be found in a mountain cabin in the Valley of Five Lakes (Dolina Pięciu Stawów).

E x a m p l e 11. Mierczyński,[12] *Sabała Melody* no. 9; mm. 1–5

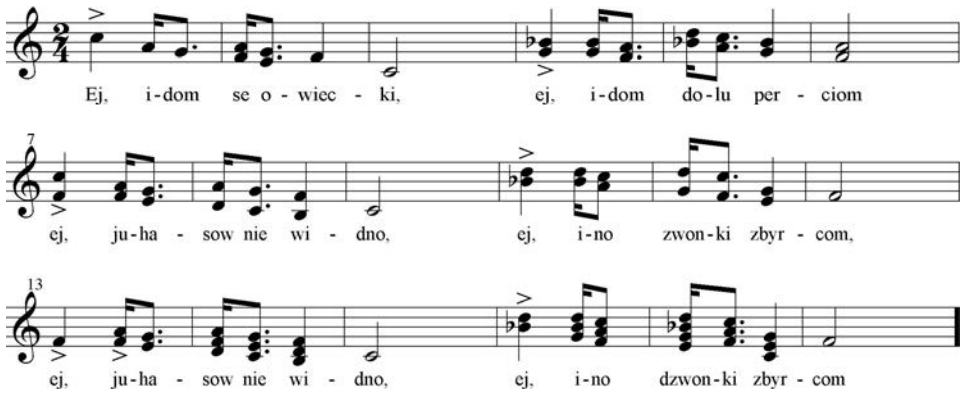


[11] Szymanowski, *Pisma muzyczne*, 252.

[12] Stanislaw Mierczyński, comp., and Karol Szymanowski, ed., *Muzyka Podhala* [The music of Podhale] (Kraków: PWM, 1949).

The *Wierchowe* (Mountain melodies), are often referred to as *ciągnione,* or 'drawn out.' These are songs for multiple voice parts, sung in falsetto by male voices and in a natural chest voice by women, without instrumental accompaniment. They are also known as *przyśpiewki*, one-stanza couplets that usually depict the beauty of nature and describe the life of the shepherds. It is always sung in a slow and drawn-out manner.

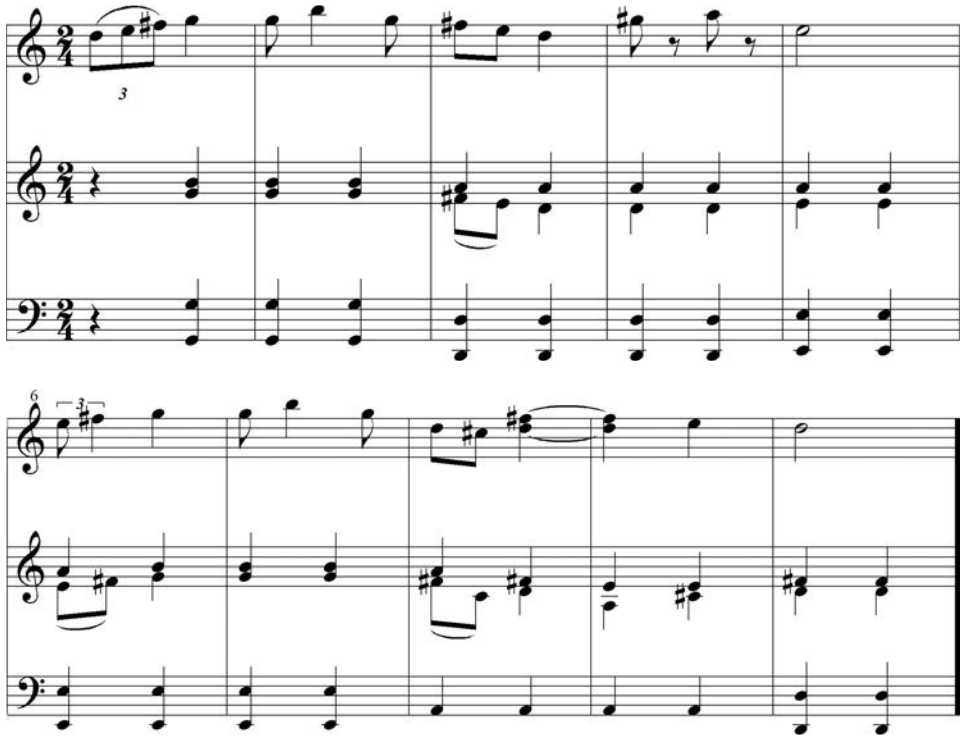
Example 12. Kotoński,[13] *Wierchowa* "Ej idom se owiecki"; p. 22



Ozwodne and *Krzesane* are well-known mountaineers' melodies used as short couplets of folk dances. The term *Ozwodne* comes from the verb *ozwodzić*, that is, 'to spread the melody out broadly', and the music accompanies what are considered some of the most difficult dance steps. The term *Krzesane* means 'stricken melodies'.

Example 13. Kotoński,[14] *Ozwodny* no. 5
A. Przyśpiewka
B. Dance (mm. 1–8)

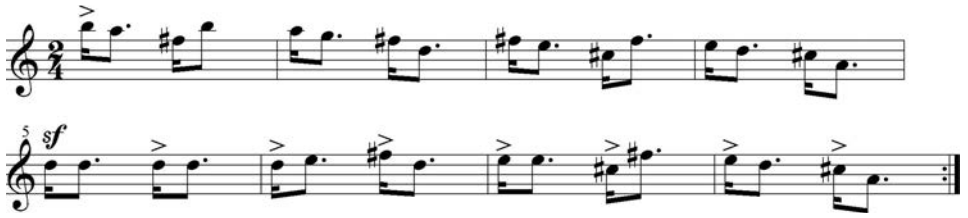
[13] Włodzimierz Kotoński, *Góralski i zbójnicki: tańce górali podhalańskich* [Góralski and zbójnicki: The dances of Podhale highlanders] (Kraków: PWM, 1956).
[14] Kotoński, *Góralski i zbójnicki*.



As Jan Gustowy explains:

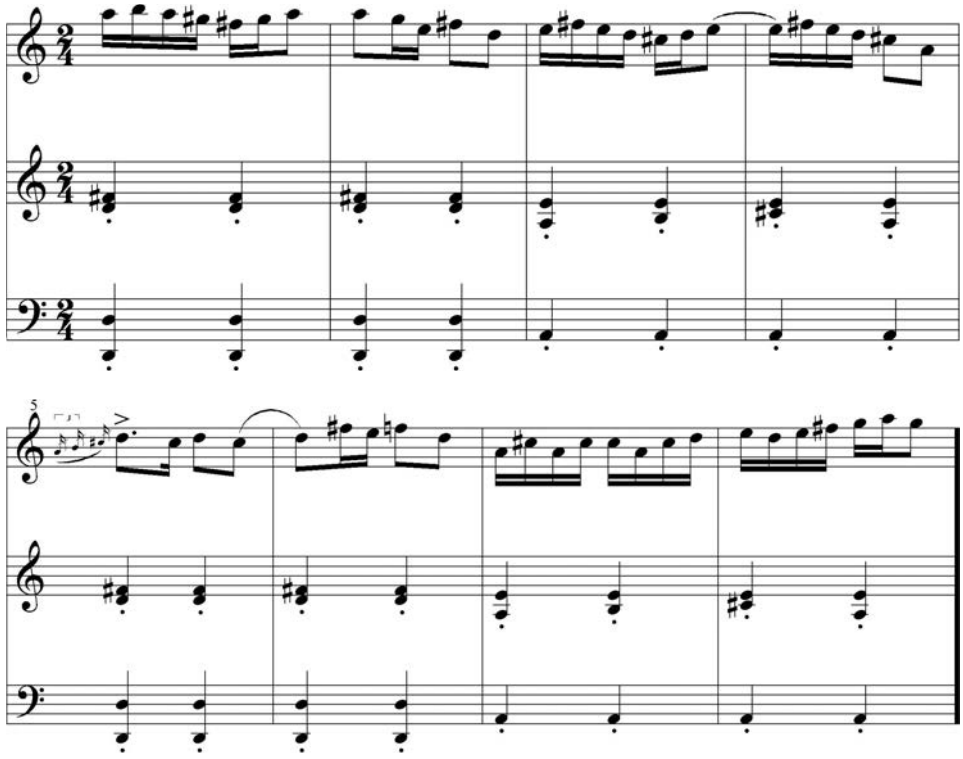
> Krzesane-tunes for dancing are characterized by rapidity and the execution of difficult, quick dance steps on a small surface area, almost in place (derived from shepherds' dances, which were originally danced on a very limited surface on the mountain.)[15]

E x a m p l e 14. Kotoński, *Krzesany Po Cztery* no. 7. A. Przyśpiewka



[15] Jan Gutt-Mostowy, *A Companion Guide to the Polish Highlands,* Maria Gieysztor De Gorgey, trans. (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1998), 91–92.

B. Dance (mm. 1–8)

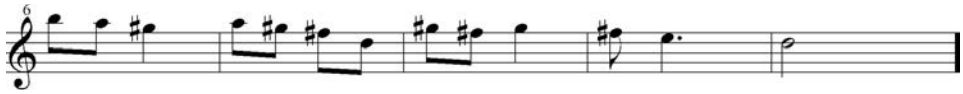


To Szymanowski's ears, the *Ozwodne,* along with the *Sabała Melody*, were the most original and direct expression of *góral* music.[16]

Wierchowe melodies are sung in parts and are performed for listeners, whereas the *Krzesane*, *Ozwode*, and *Zbójnickie* melodies accompany the dances and are associated with the very specific steps of the *Góralski* dance. *Wierchowe* and *Ozwodne* (Example 11) are often based on a five-measure phrase structure.

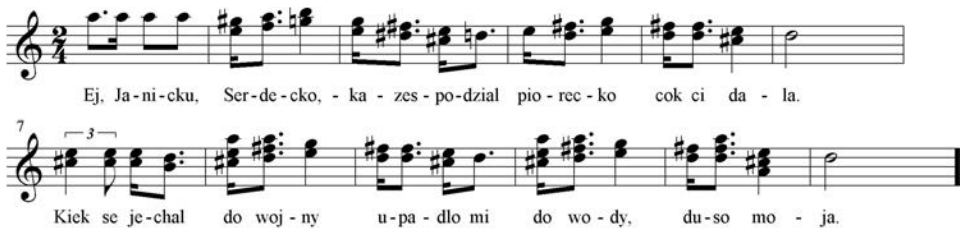
Example 15. Kotoński, *Wierchowe*, p. 23

[16] Jerzy Mieczyslaw Rytard, *Wspomnienia o Karolu Szymanowskim* [Remembrances of Karol Szymanowski] (Kraków: PWM, 1947), 9.



The majority of Podhale melodies are sung in parts, except for the *Przyśpiewki* (one stanza couplet) to the *Góralski* dance. The performance practice of Podhale singers is to add thirds below and/or above the main melody. Sometimes, an emerging unison can be observed. Regardless of the number of voices, each verse is initiated by a solo voice, which is then joined and accompanied by others singing in parts after a few measures.

Example 16. Kotoński, *Ej, Janicku Serdecko*
Przyśpiewka

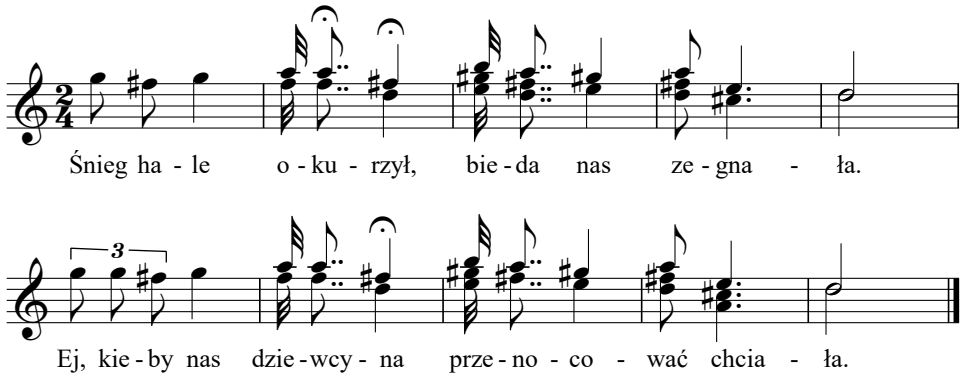


Crossing of voices is a well-known and frequently used technique in Podhale music and occurs naturally due to the high register of the melodies. The constant interchange and mixing of the parts eventually became standard in performance, in some cases contributing to a lack of continuity in the melodic line. In other instances, there is an observed shift of emphasis toward chordal harmony. As Kotoński writes:

> Every Podhale song is sung in a special rhythmic manner. It is a kind of tempo *rubato,* which is spread out across the entire 5-measure phrase. Usually, the beginning of the phrase is accelerated, the middle part is slow, and starting in the middle of the 3rd measure an *accelerando* can be observed. Additionally, within each measure, rhythmic values are altered as well. The strong, accented beats are usually shortened, while the weak beats are prolonged.[17]

[17] Kotoński, *Góralski i zbójnicki*, 27.

Example 17. Kotoński, *Śnieg hale okurzył*



There are only two surviving folk dances of Podhale: *Zbójnicki* (Robbers' Dance) and *Góralski* (the word is an adjective derived from *górale* – Highlanders).

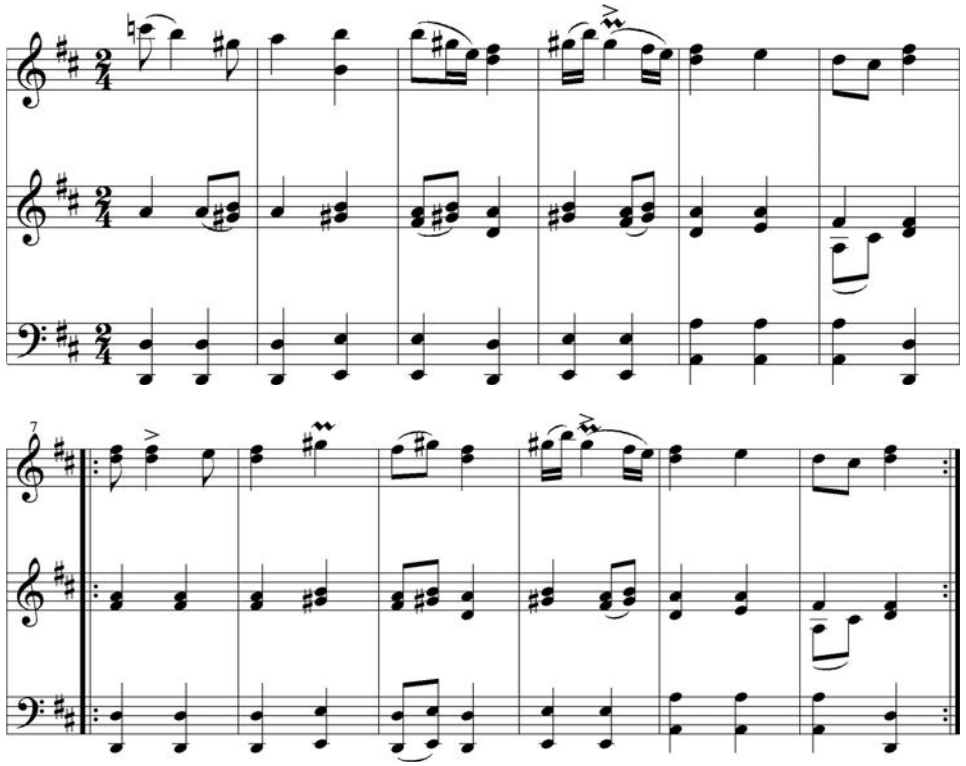
Góralski is a cycle of several dances in 2/4 time for a solo couple, in which partners touch only during the final spin when they turn together. The vocal *Nuty* (tunes) – sung in a "free" rhythm and with added *rubato* – are incorporated into the cycle of *Góralski* dances.

The usual order of the *Góralski* dance runs as follows: *Nuty Ozwodne* (Example 14), *Drobne* (Example 19), and *Krzesane* (Example 15). The set is concluded with the *Zielone* dance (Example 18) in which the dancing couple spins around rapidly. This dance is traditionally performed by only one couple at a time. It is considered a very difficult dance to learn by outsiders, mainly because of its quite unusual and non-traditional movements. It calls for "quick, almost staccato movements of [the] legs"[18] which need to be executed at a brisk pace.

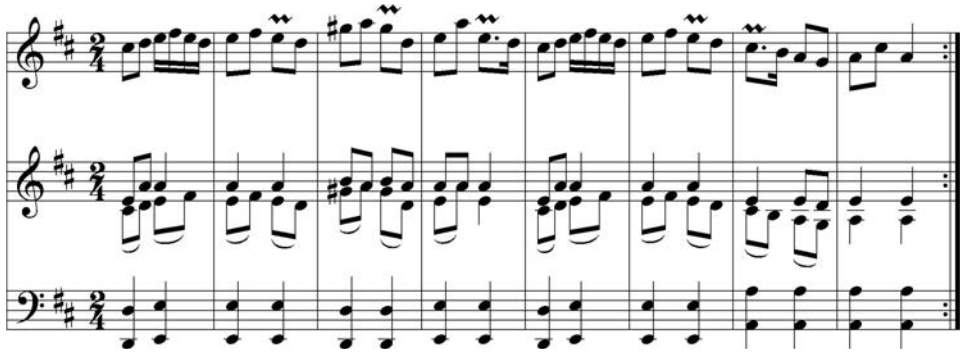
Zbójnicki is more of a ritualistic men's dance reserved for family celebrations or social parties. The dancers are required to wear traditional outfits and hold *ciupagas* in their right hands (the *ciupaga* is a wooden axe with a handle, which served to aid mountain climbing, or as a weapon against wild animals). The most popular tune of the *Zbójnicki,* which is well-known in Poland, is "Tańcowali zbójnicy."

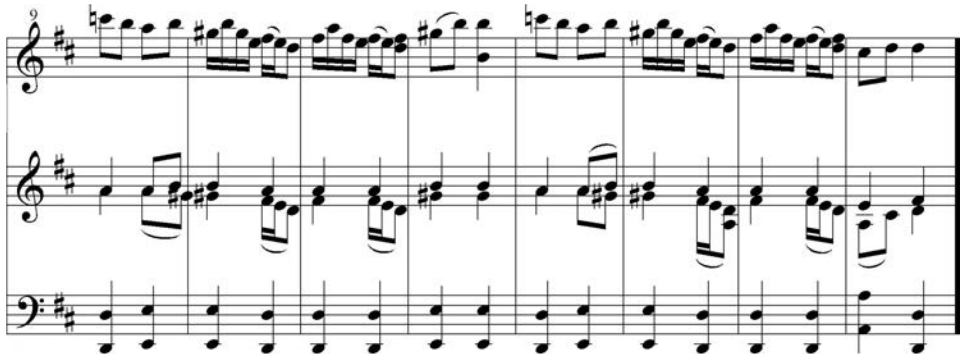
[18] Dziewanowska, *Polish Folk Dances and Songs*, 273.

Example 18. Mierczyński, *Zielone* 90

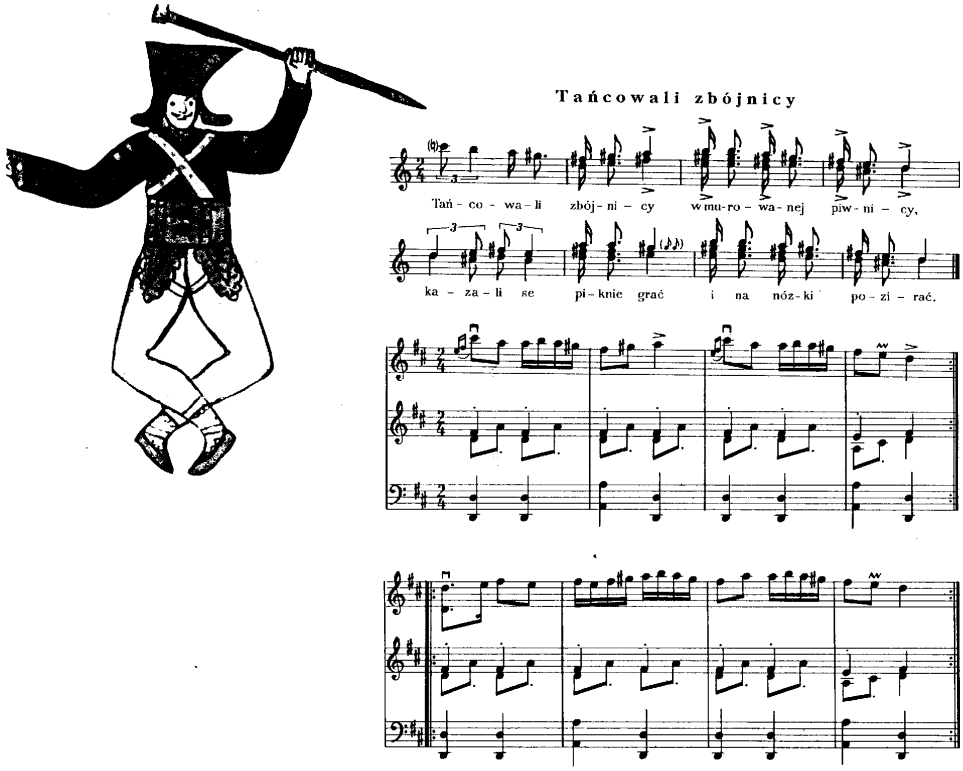


Example 19. Mierczyński, *Drobny Zakopiański* 64



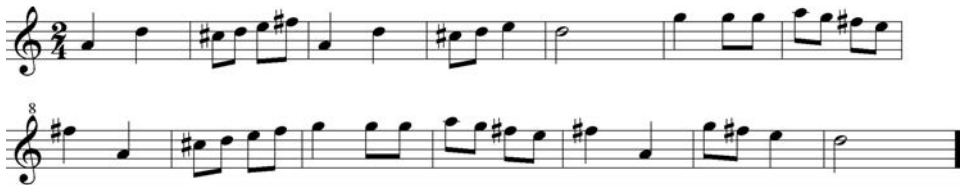


Example 20. Mierczyński, *Zbójnicki*



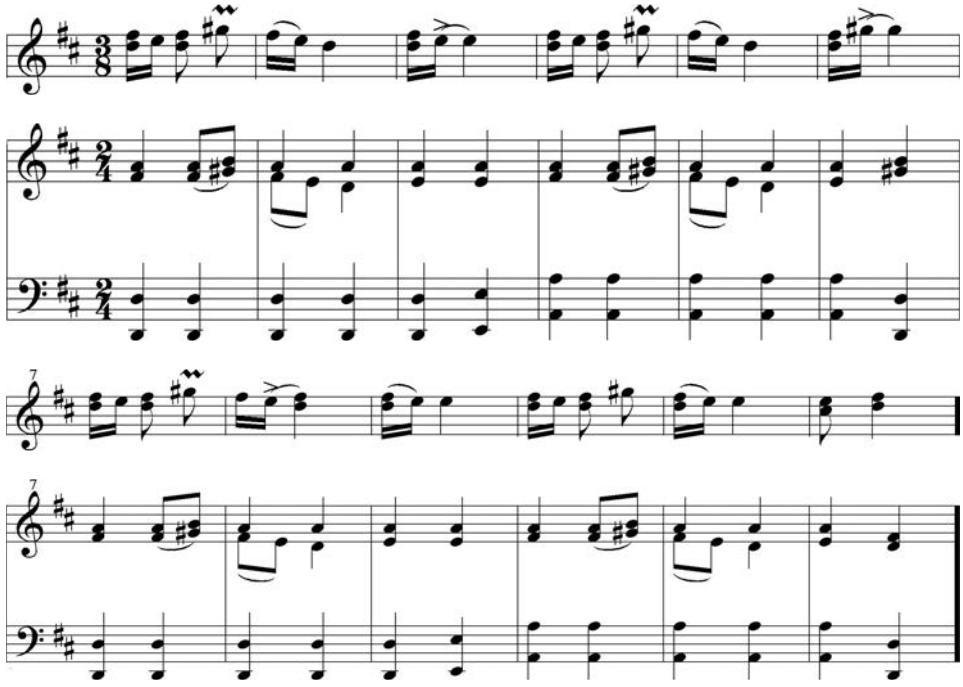
Another famous *Nuta zbójnicka* (Zbójnicki tune):

Example 21.



The Highlanders' dances are as widely known for their acrobatic character as for their complex and raucous rhythmic patterns. Traditionally, performances of these dances are organized into established sequences, where the diverse tempos, volumes and characters are introduced in cycles. In *Zbójnicki* no. 62 from Mierczyński's collection, one finds a polyrhythmic structure, in addition to a fast tempo (♩ = 164).

Example 22. Mierczyński, *Zbójnicki* no. 62

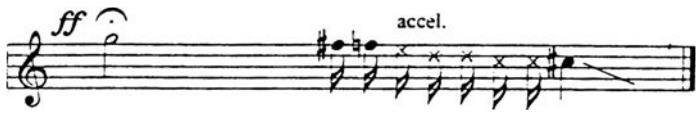


The cycle usually begins with the moderate tempo of *Ozwodna* melodies performed relatively freely and richly embellished by the first violinist; the final sections of these pieces are augmented in a typical fashion, thereby

transforming a four-bar phrase into one of five bars. The following sections of the cycle are individually identified (*Krzesane*, *Zielone*) and present different tempi and other performance attitudes. In all parts of the cycle, however, the basic idea remains the same. The accompaniment by the second violin – often performed by two violinists – and the double bass maintain the basic pulse.[19]

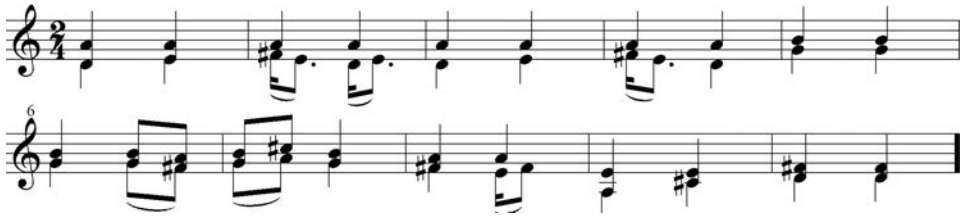
The music of Podhale is not limited, however, to collective performances. Various forms of solo instrumental songs (played on shepherd's pipes and trumpets) and vocal calls are widely used, one of which, *Wyskanie,* was undoubtedly used by shepherds as a communication signal.

Example 23. Bielawski, *Wyskanie*



The Podhale folk group, called *kapela,* consists of four instrumentalists: three violins (one primo and two secundo), and a cello with only three strings called *basy.* The primo violinist plays the main melody, which is highly ornamented with various figurations, and is largely improvised. The parts of the two secundo violinists consist of "filling in" of the harmonies, using the strings G and D, or D and A. Sometimes, rhythmic variations or changes in articulation are used.

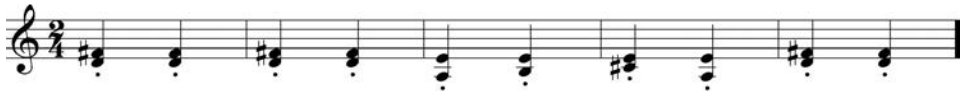
Example 24. Kotoński, p. 30



The *basy*, on the other hand, provides the rhythmic and harmonic support for the band. *Staccato* articulation can be frequently seen in *Ozwodne* and *Krzesane*.

[19] Czekanowska, *Polish Folk Dances*, 87.

Example 25. Kotoński, p. 31



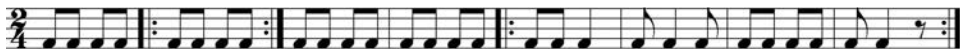
And finally, the city of Kraków should be included in the discussion of Polish folk music of this region. Even though Kraków is not technically located in the mountains, its southern position and close relationship to the Podhale region draws it into the sphere of influence of Highland folk music. The characteristics of the majority of music from the Kraków area, especially the presence of duple meter, signify its close relationship to the Highland region, justifying its inclusion here.

The most popular dance of the old Polish capital takes its name from the city itself, *Krakowiak*. It is characterized by syncopation, duple meter, and the accentuation of the weak beats.

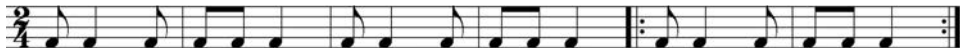
The Sobieskis[20] distinguished four types of this dance with the following rhythmic structures:

Example 26. Sobiescy, p. 221

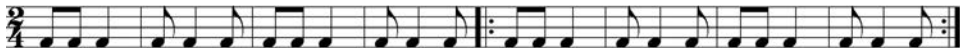
No. 1



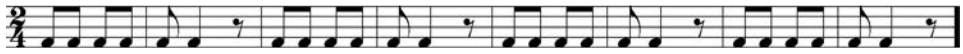
No. 2



No. 3



No. 4

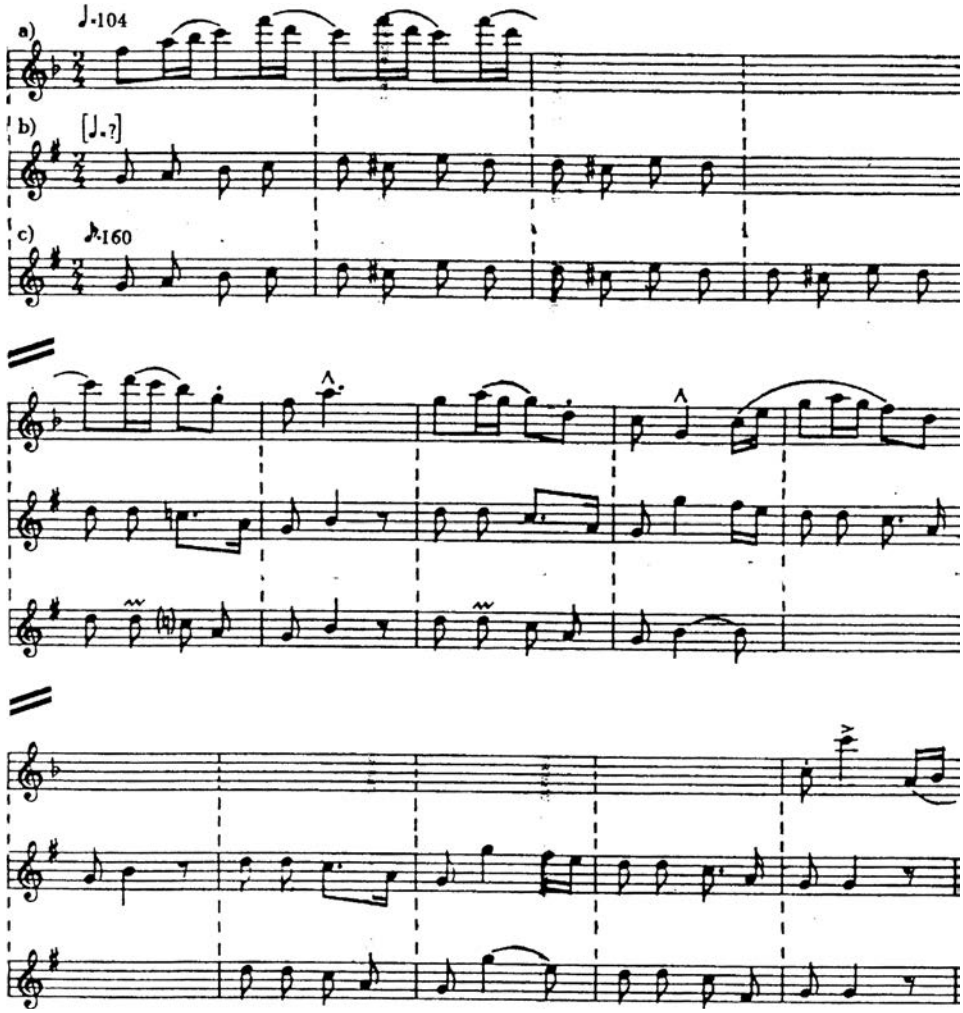


One of the most famous *Krakowiaks* was used by Chopin under the same title:

[20] Sobiescy, *Polska muzyka ludowa,* 384–385.

Example 27. Sobiescy, p. 418 (Example 248)

a) Chopin Rondo à la Krakowiak op. 14.
b) Wacław z Oleska, *Muzyka do pieśni polskich i ruskich* (Music for Polish and Russian songs) 1833, no. 3.
c) Kolberg, *Pieśni ludu polskiego* (Polish folk songs) 1842, no. 24.



Following this survey of the geographical layout that both formed and defined Polish folk music and having outlined the basic structures of the various folk forms, the next chapter will offer a detailed analysis of the individual influences on Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*.

Chapter 4

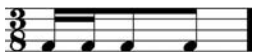
An Analysis of Twenty Mazurkas Op. 50 and Two Mazurkas Op. 62

A. Rhythmic Patterns

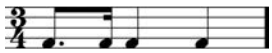
It is almost impossible to separate the folk mazurka from today's stylized and modified version. The dance is no longer present in the everyday life of Poles and the existing versions of the folk mazurka are not free of foreign influences and modifications imposed by composers, performers, and transcribers. I would like to emphasize once more that Chopin's *Mazurkas* do not represent the folk *Mazur* alone but rather are stylized forms of several of the Lowland dances: *Mazur, Kujawiak*, and *Oberek*. On the basis of musical examples from the past, the majority of which can be found in Oscar Kolberg's collected works, scholars have agreed that the following rhythmic formulas are commonly present in mazurkas.

Example 28.
A. Vyacheslav Paskhalov

or

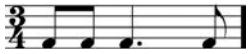


B. Kwaśnicowa, p. 9

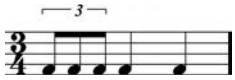


The first variant is considered by Chomiński and Paskhalov to be the most ubiquitous.[1] Zieliński also identified the following rhythmic modifications present in the stylized form of the mazurka:

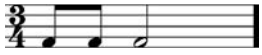
Example 29.
A. Dotted rhythms.



B. Triplets (frequent in *Kujawiaks*).

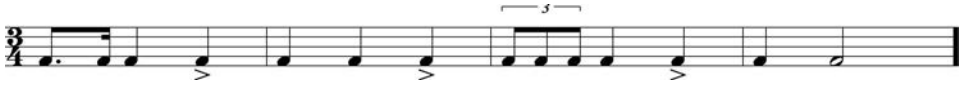


C. Half note in place of a quarter note.

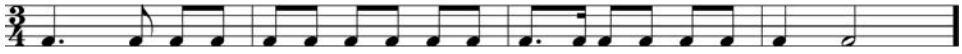


These patterns and borrowings from other folk dances contributed to the creation of the rhythmic foundation of the mazurka dance that is familiar today.

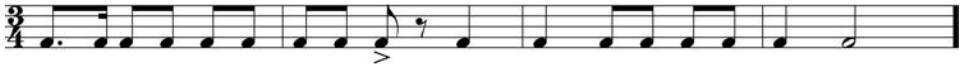
Example 30.
A.



B.

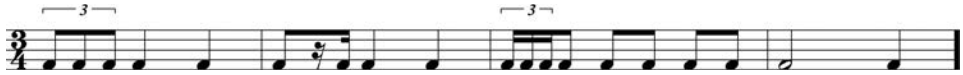


C.



[1] Tadeusz Zieliński, "Mazurki Karola Szymanowskiego" [The mazurkas of Karol Szymanowski], in *Z życia i twórczości Karola Szymanowskiego. Studia i materiały* [The life and works of Karol Szymanowski. Studies and materials], ed. Józef Chomiński (Kraków: PWM, 1960), 123.

D.

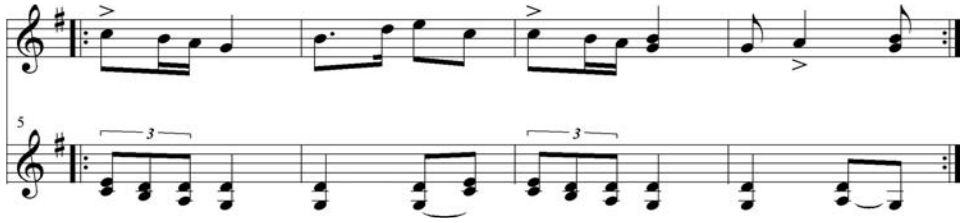


Tadeusz Zieliński observed a close relationship between the rhythmic patterns of Chopin's and Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*, and according to him, Szymanowski followed Chopin's patterns without any modifications. After a detailed analysis of the *Mazurkas*, I could not fully agree with Zielinski's statement. I discovered that Szymanowski rarely followed Chopin's rhythmic patterns. Instead, he mixed some of the basic *Mazurka* rhythmic patterns with Podhale rhythmic patterns, giving more prominence to the Highland elements. Łobaczewska, in *Życie i twórczość Karola Szymanowskiego*, also alluded to an individuality in the rhythmic patterns in Szymanowski's works,[2] further severing the connection with Chopin. For example, in *Mazurka* no. 9:

E x a m p l e 31. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 9

For Zieliński, the only aspect of rhythmic uniqueness was the presence of multi-layered rhythmic patterns, a characteristic that distinguished Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* from Chopin's compositions. That practice, Zieliński admitted, had its roots in and was influenced by Podhale music. An example of this can be found in Mierczyński's transcription no. 15, where a triplet in the middle voice is mixed with the 8th and 16th notes of the upper voice.

E x a m p l e 32. Mierczyński, no. 15



[2] Stanisława Łobaczewska, *Życie i twórczość Karola Szymanowskiego* [Life and works of Karol Szymanowski] (Kraków: PWM, 1950), 650.

Nevertheless, Zieliński argued that the influence of Podhale folk could not be significant due to the use of the mazurka time signature. I strongly disagree with this conclusion. The Góral influence pervades almost all of the elements, including the rhythmic patterns. I find support for this belief in Chybiński, who did address the question of Podhale folk music influence on the *Mazurkas*, and also pointed out their diverse character. In one of his first written articles about Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* in 1925, he asked the following question:

> And yet, how to reconcile 'Podhale' with 'mazurka'? On the one hand, there is the Podhale, where even-time signatures are standard and melodies are as short as an epigram, extremely beautiful and compact, but short as the *Sabała's* 'hunting law.' The Mazurka rhythm, on the other hand, gives a greater variety of rhythmic possibilities.[3]

I would like to present my thesis, based on my study of Podhale folk music and my personal experience as a performer of Szymanowski's compositions, that the *Mazurkas* op. 50 are in fact closely related to Podhale folk music. Additionally, I believe that they have a much closer relationship with Podhale folk music than they do with Lowland music. Yet, as Chybiński noticed, the mazurka genre did provide Szymanowski with a wealth of rhythmic variety built into a perfectly clear, classical form of folk dance.

The wide range of opinions regarding the origins and influences in Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* possibly stem from the expectation that they are folk dances written in 3/4 time and should behave as such. On paper, they do not look too much different from Chopin's *Mazurkas*, but the differences become quite apparent when one performs Szymanowski and hears the actual music unfold. The complex rhythmic patterns, irregular phrase structure, and highly individual accompaniment patterns, which very often defy the pulse pattern of a 3/4 time signature, create a wholly new eclectic environment where the mazurka becomes only a small reflection of itself. With that in mind, I would like to demonstrate the two major influences on Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*: 1) the presence of the Lowland rhythmic patterns including Chopin's influence, and 2) the presence of the Highland rhythmic patterns.

The basic characteristics of Podhale music were introduced in Chapter 3. As I mentioned earlier, Highland music is almost exclusively in duple meter.

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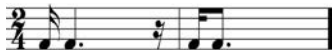
[3] Adolf Chybiński, "Mazurki Karola Szymanowskiego" [The mazurkas by Karol Szymanowski], *Muzyka* 1–2 (1925): 13.

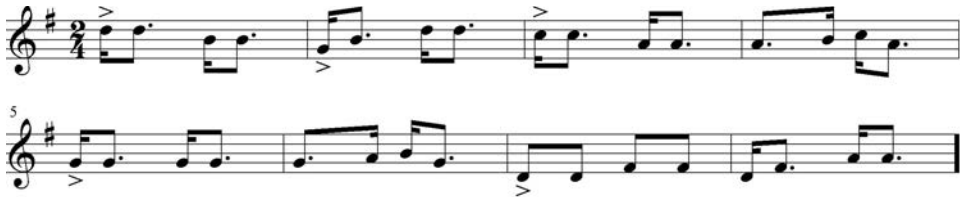
The most prominent rhythmic pattern and one exclusive to this area, not present in other parts of Poland, is the reverse dotted rhythm.

E x a m p l e 33. Reverse-dotted rhythm. Bielawski



There is a strong tendency in Podhale music to accent weak and short values. This characteristic is unique to Highland music and is not shared with music from other regions.

E x a m p l e 34. Podhale music. *Pieśni Podhala* 1958: 371 no. 132 (Bielawski, p. 195)

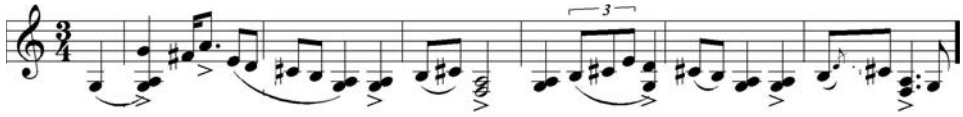


As Alan Barrody-Szymanowski noted:

> (. . .) the result of incorporating folk music was the setting in motion of the activities of driving power and rhythms. He [Szymanowski] studied the structure scrupulously in order to draw from it for his new style.[4]

One of the most convincing examples that I have discovered is to be found in *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 20.

E x a m p l e 35. *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 20 Szymanowski; mm. 1–6



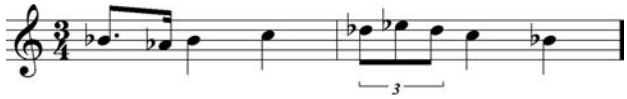
Here, Szymanowski adopted Chopin's stylized form of the mazurka, but added a new and undiscovered style of Highland music with which Chopin

[4] Alan Barrody-Szymanowski, "Szymanowski: A Creator of Polish Impressionism," *Music Journal* (July 1973): 102.

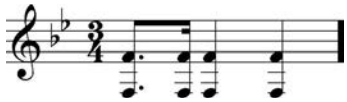
was not familiar. Thus, Szymanowski's blending of rhythmic patterns resulted in a structure which consisted of both "old" and "new" elements. Although Szymanowski called his compositions *Mazurkas*, it is very difficult to find the previously mentioned rhythmic models of the mazurka in their entire and exact form. Instead, Szymanowski often resorted to various modifications, as outlined below.

Model 1

Example 36. *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 5; mm. 17–18

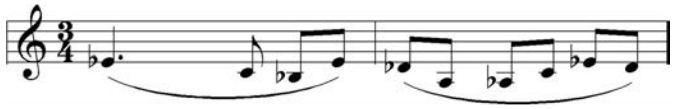


Example 37. *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 6; m. 1

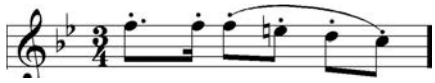


Model 2

Example 38. *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 5; mm. 10–11



Example 39. *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 6; m. 45

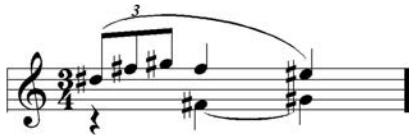


Model 3

Example 40. *Mazurka* op. 62 no. 1; m. 1

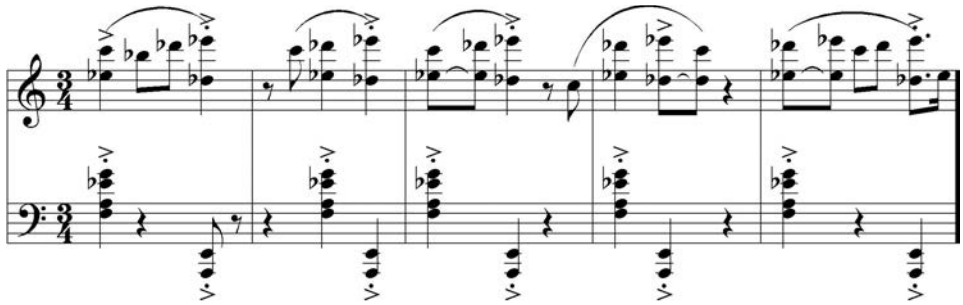
Model 4

Example 41. *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 13; m. 60



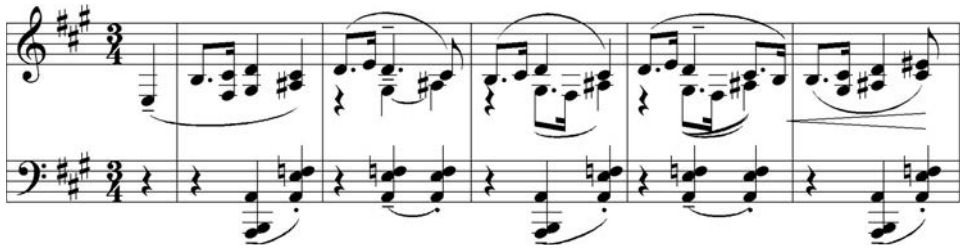
Examples of shifting accents, a major characteristic of mazurkas, can be easily discerned.

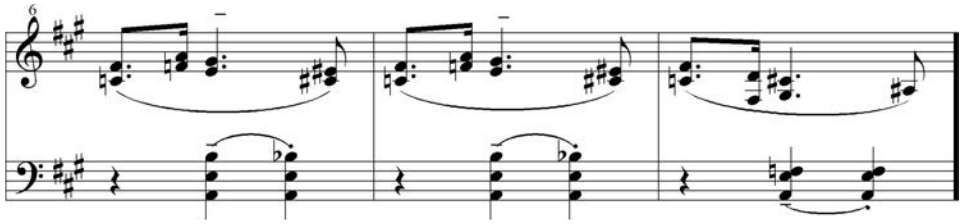
Example 42. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 10; mm. 61–65



Zieliński noted the individual way in which Chopin stylized the major Polish folk dances, *Mazur*, *Kujawiak*, and *Oberek* into one genre, and found examples in Szymanowski's compositions of diverse rhythmic structures based on one-measure rhythmic patterns also present in Chopin's *Mazurkas* and folk dances. The majority of Chopin's rhythmic patterns, however, are built upon a four-measure structure, which is not often the case – neither in folk dances nor in Szymanowski's compositions. *Mazurka* no. 8 from op. 50 illustrates this quite clearly.

Example 43.

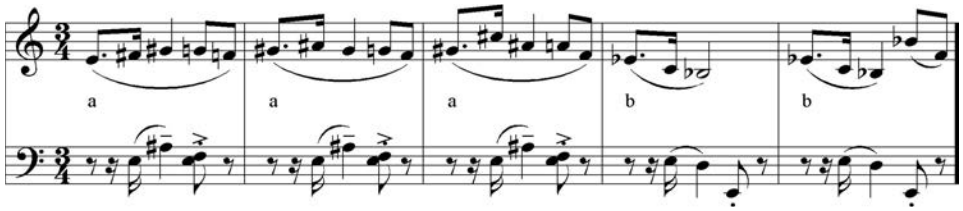




Five-measure patterns:

aaabb

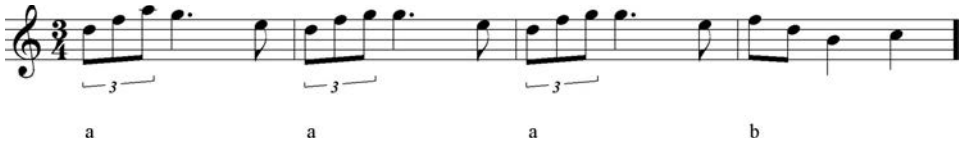
E x a m p l e 44. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 5; mm. 1–5



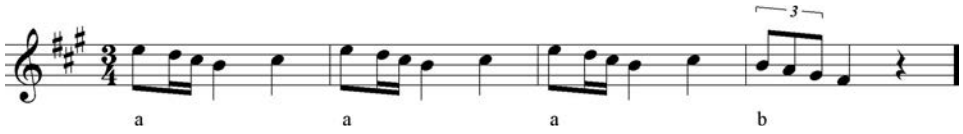
This pattern can be considered to be a one-measure extension of the aaab pattern present in folk music and in Chopin's *Mazurkas*.

aaab

E x a m p l e 45. Kolberg, *Pieśni ludu polskiego* (Polish folk songs) no. 88

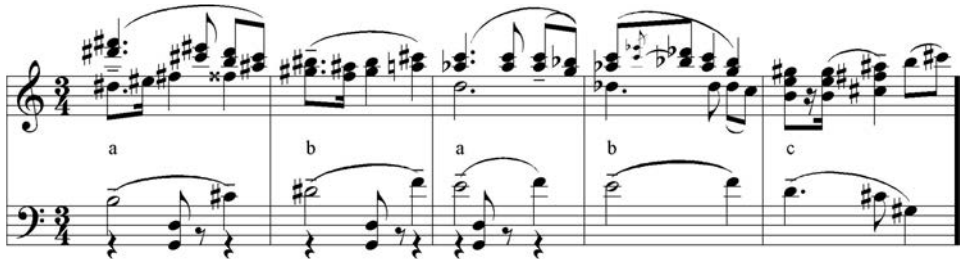


E x a m p l e 46. Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 6 no. 1; mm. 37–41



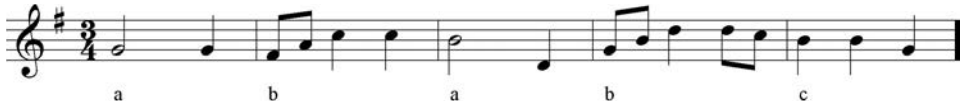
ababc

E x a m p l e 47. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 11; mm. 13–17



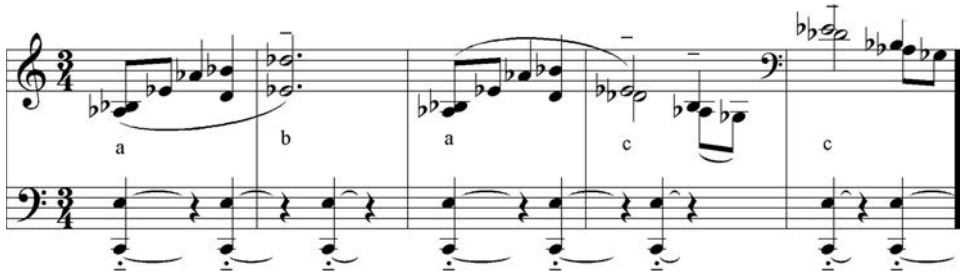
This five-measure pattern can also be found in Kolberg's collection:

E x a m p l e 48. Kolberg, *Pieśni ludu polskiego* (Polish folk songs) no. 58



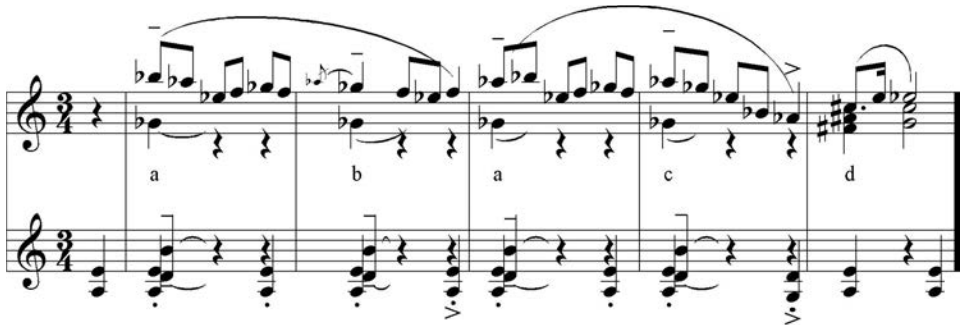
abacc

E x a m p l e 49. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 8; mm. 33–37



abacd

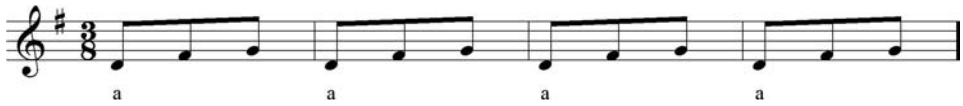
Example 50. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 7; mm. 1–5



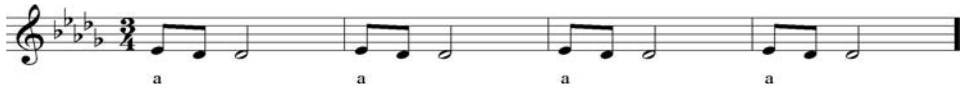
Various patterns found in folk music, and in Chopin's and Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*:

aaaa

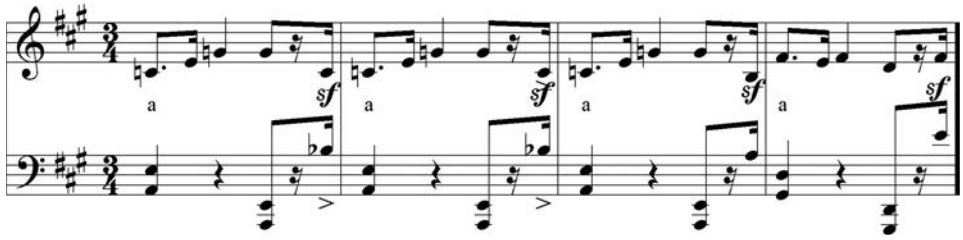
Example 51. Kolberg, *Mazowsze* no. 407



Example 52. Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 41 no. 3; mm. 1–4



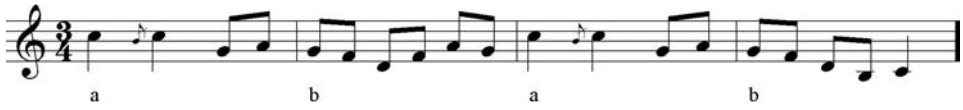
Example 53. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 2; mm. 37–40



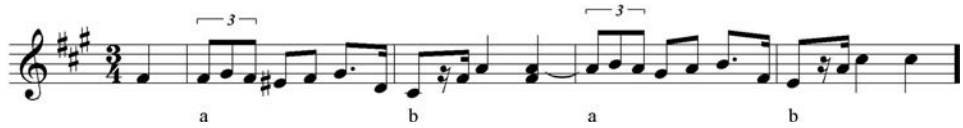
This type of parallel writing can be considered to be Szymanowski's favored and most frequently used method.

abab

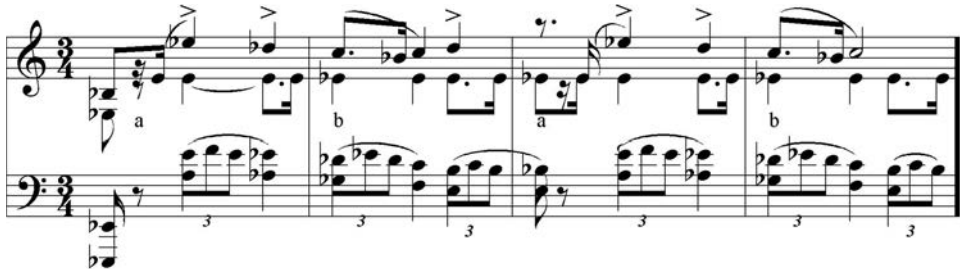
E x a m p l e 54. Kolberg, *Pieśni ludu polskiego* (Polish folk songs) no. 452



E x a m p l e 55. Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 6 no. 1

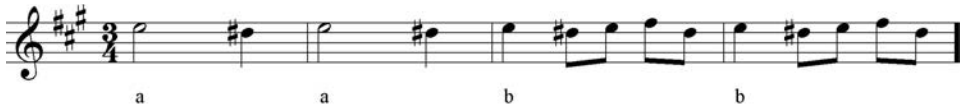


E x a m p l e 56. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 10; mm. 15–18

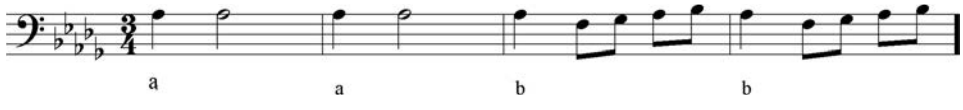


aabb

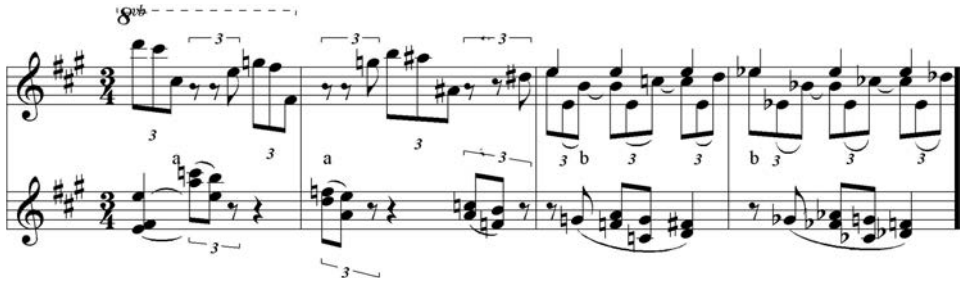
E x a m p l e 57. Kolberg, *Pieśni ludu polskiego* (Polish folk songs) no. 44



E x a m p l e 58. Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 30 no. 3



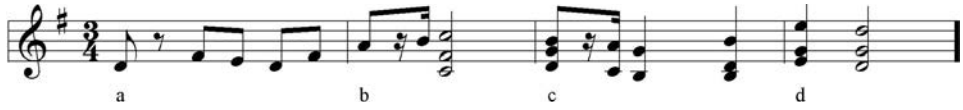
Example 59. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 62 no. 1; mm. 15–18



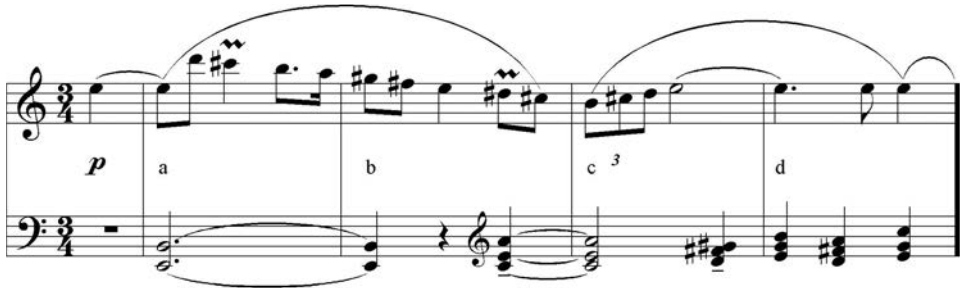
Other rhythmic structures based on four-measure rhythmic patterns can be found:

abcd

Example 60. Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 1; mm. 1–4

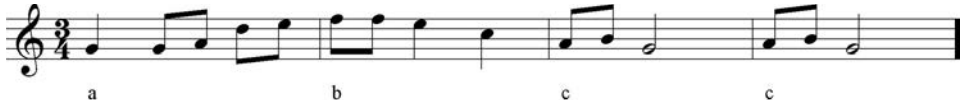


Example 61. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 1

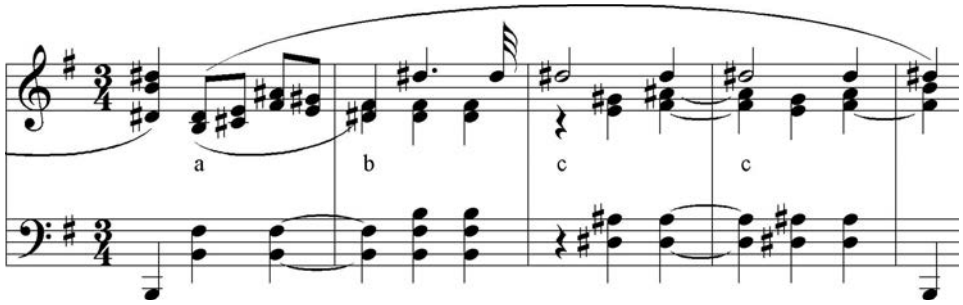


abcc

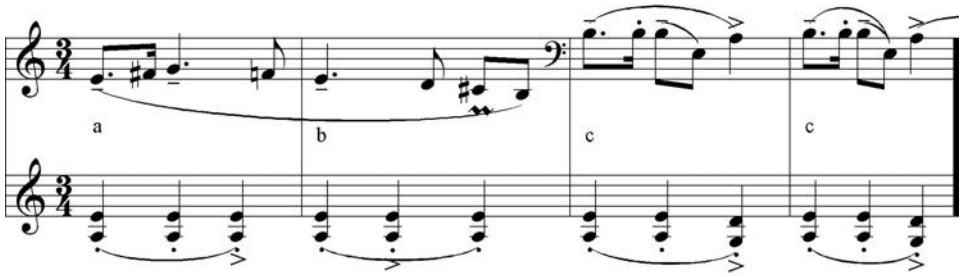
Example 62. Kolberg, *Pieśni ludu polskiego IV* (Polish folk songs) no. 422



E x a m p l e 63. Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 41 no. 2; mm. 21–24

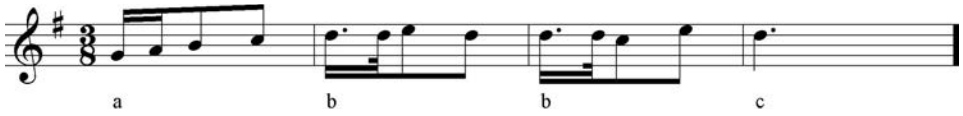


E x a m p l e 64. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 11; mm. 3–6

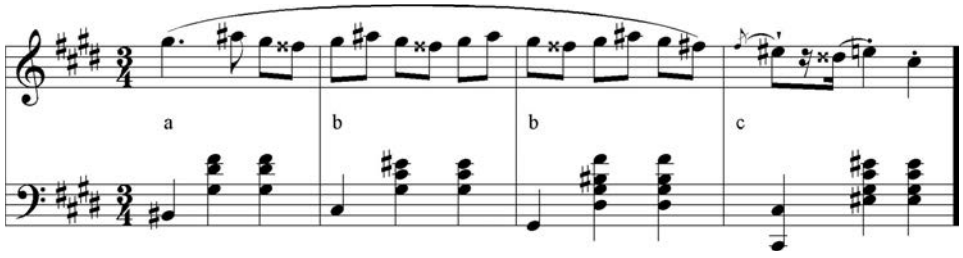


abbc

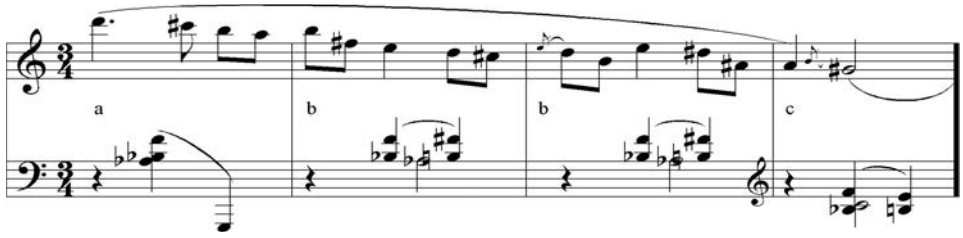
E x a m p l e 65. Kolberg, *Pieśni ludu polskiego IV* (Polish folk Songs) no. 386



E x a m p l e 66. Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 41 no. 1; mm. 17–20

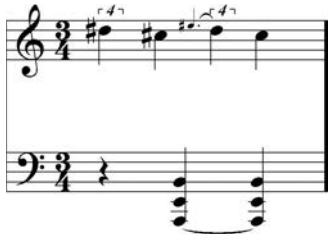


Example 67. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 62 no. 2; mm. 3–6

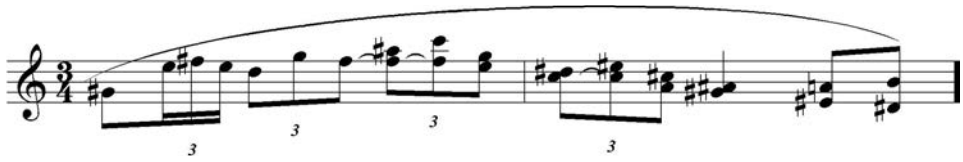


The asymmetrical rhythmic phrase structure common to *góral* music is evident in Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* as well. Triplets, prominent in Lowland music, are incorporated along with quintuplets and septuplets, which are almost never featured in Lowland music. Moreover, the expansion from the basic three-quarter to the four-quarter model in 3/4 time is featured in *Mazurka* no. 16.

Example 68. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 16; m. 9

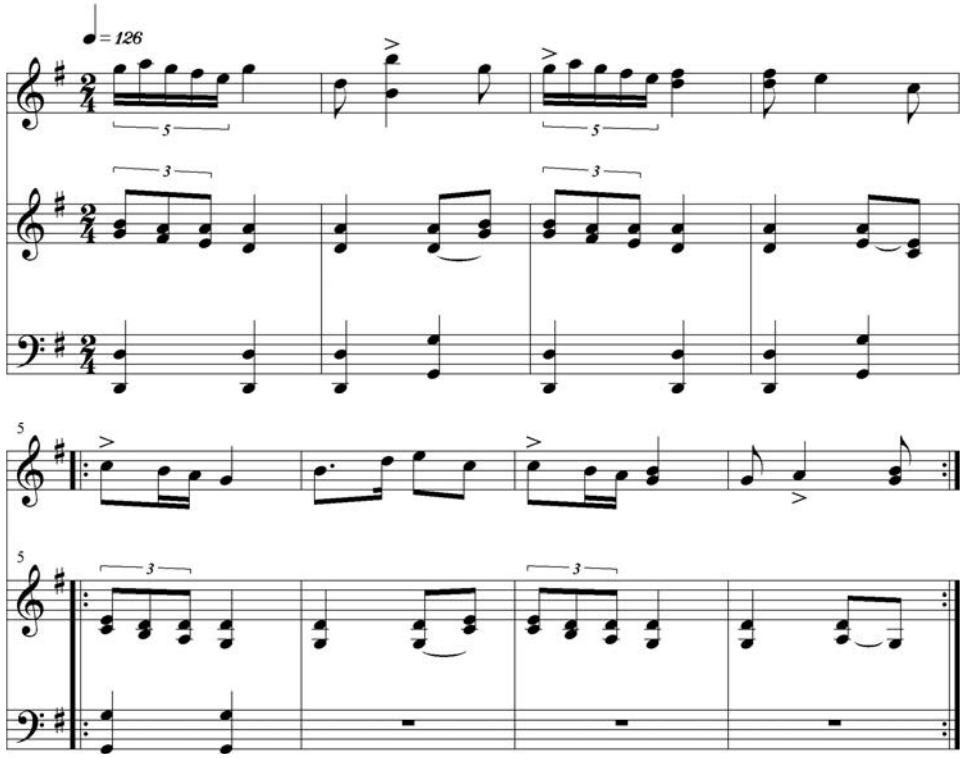


Example 69. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 9; mm. 31–32

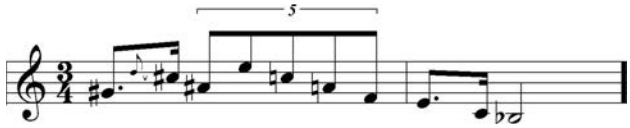


Quadruplets.

E x a m p l e 70. Mierczyński, *Chochołowska* 15

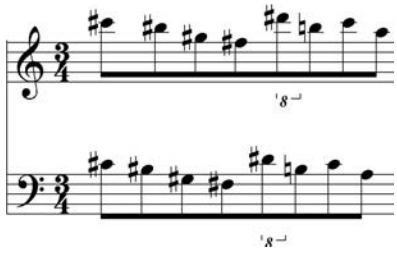


E x a m p l e 71. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 5; m. 8



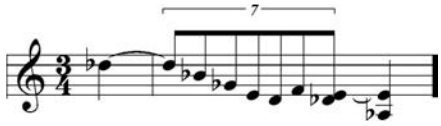
Eight-eighth notes in 3/4.

Example 72. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 9; m. 51



Septuplet.

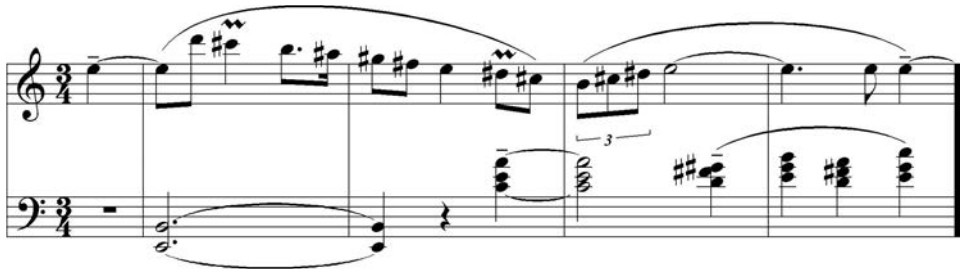
Example 73. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 18; mm. 61–62



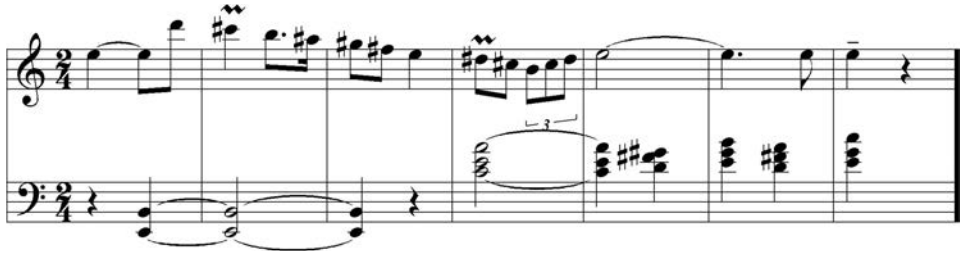
The use of very short, often accented note values alongside long ones within one measure recreate the very sharp and harsh character of Podhale music. This tendency is not present in Lowland music or in Chopin's *Mazurkas*, which proves the influence of Highland music on Szymanowski's compositions (Example 53).

The most striking evidence of the Podhale influence in Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* is, however, the shifting climaxes within phrases and the accenting of the weak beats within the 3/4 meter. This creates a conflict between the organic perception of the music and its notation. Although the music is visually organized into triple meter, in some cases a dance in 2/4 time emerges. Consider the following example:

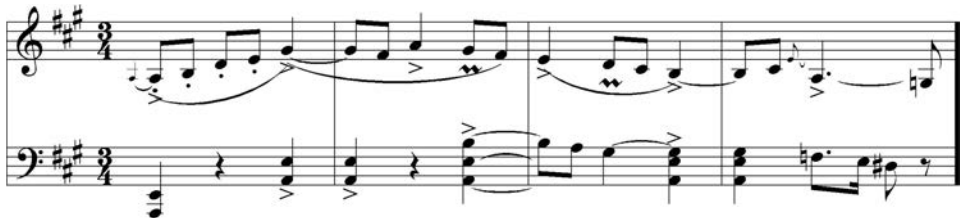
Example 74. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 1; mm. 1–4



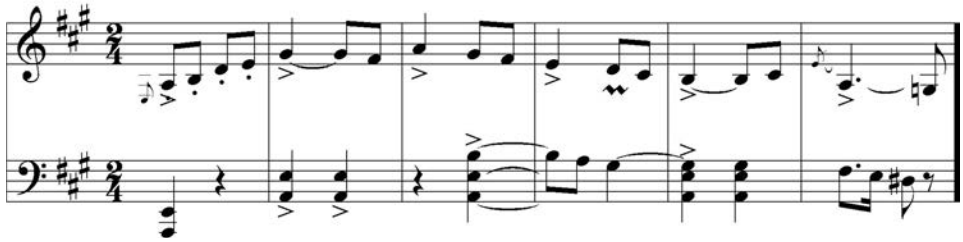
Example 75. In 2/4



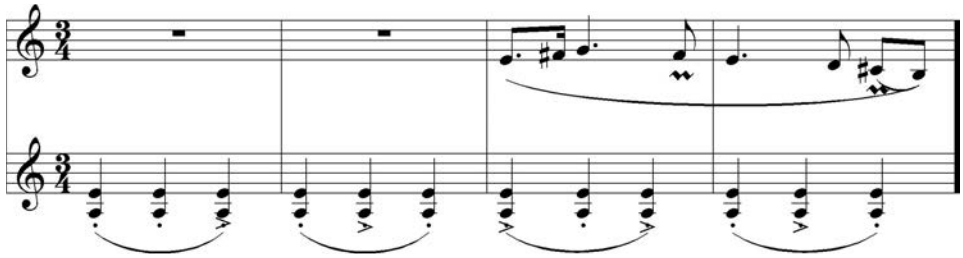
Example 76. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 2; mm. 1–4



Example 77. In 2/4 time

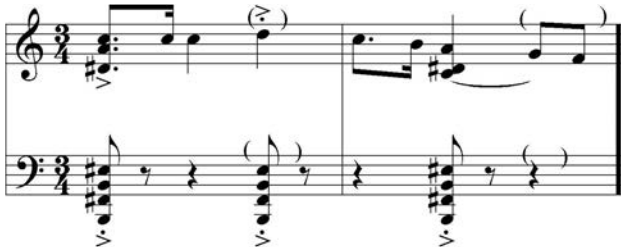


Example 78. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 11; mm. 1–4



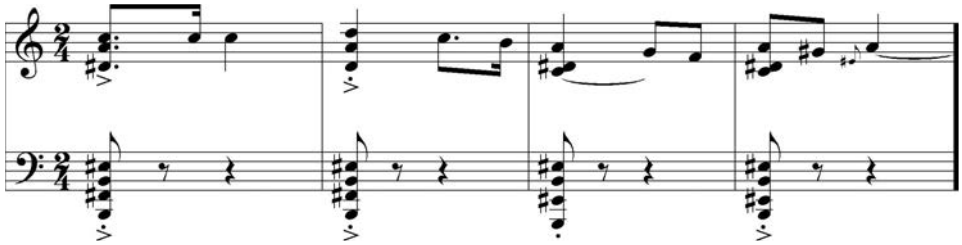
Sometimes, one might wonder if the composer was trying to transform the Podhale folk traditions into Lowland genres by adding extra values to the Podhale tunes. For example:

Example 79. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 8; m. 30



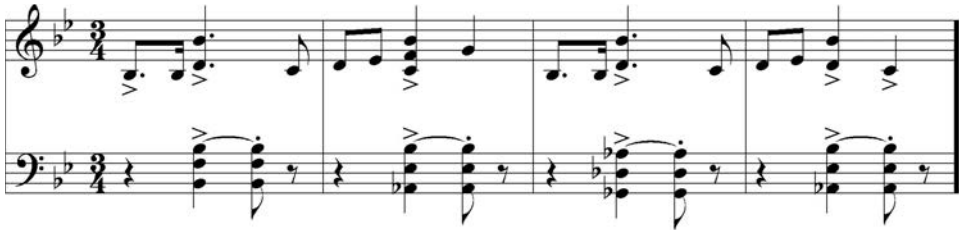
The same *Mazurka* in 2/4 time.

Example 80. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 8



Although the mazurka dance is known for its shifting accents, which can fall on any given beat in a measure, it is very rare in folk mazurkas to repeatedly emphasize the same second beat. This practice has instead been adopted from the syncopations found in Podhale music and it is featured in many of Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*:

Example 81. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 4; mm. 1–4

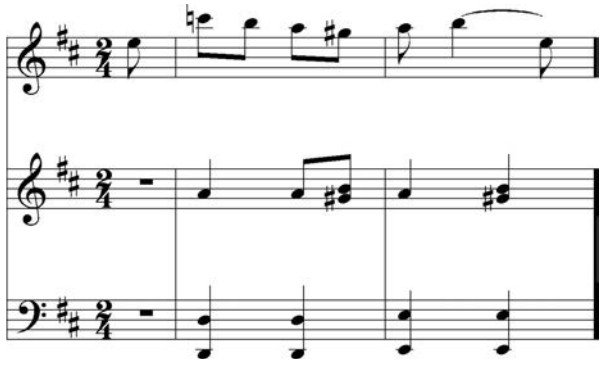


The majority of Szymanowski's mazurkas begin with an upbeat, which is another example of *góral* music influence. As Bielawski noticed:

> Polish folk melodies are characterized by the almost absolute phenomenon of starting the melody with a full bar, expressed not only by the lack of an upbeat in the beginning of the melody, but also in the fundamental consistency of all the versification and music caesurae fitted into the measures.[5]

Although rare, upbeats are nonetheless present in the music of the Podhale region.

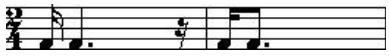
Example 82. Mierczyński, no. 49 *Ozwodna zakopiańska*



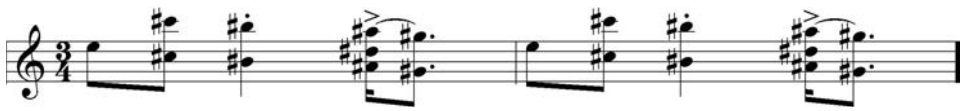
Additionally, the chief characteristic of Podhale music, syncopation, has been modified and appears in its most basic form: as an accentuation of a weak beat.

The reverse dotted rhythms with smaller rhythmic values appearing on the strong beat and longer ones falling on weak beats are featured quite conspicuously in both Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* and in Podhale music.

Example 83. Bielawski, p. 153



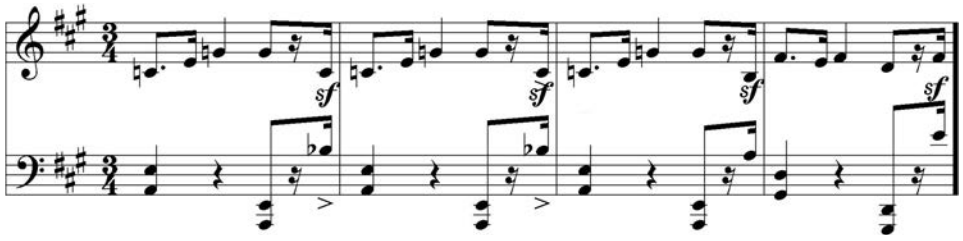
Example 84. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 16; mm. 30–31



[5] Ludwig Bielawski, *Rytmika polskich pieśni ludowych* [The rhythmic structure of Polish folk songs] (Kraków: PWM, 1970), 192.

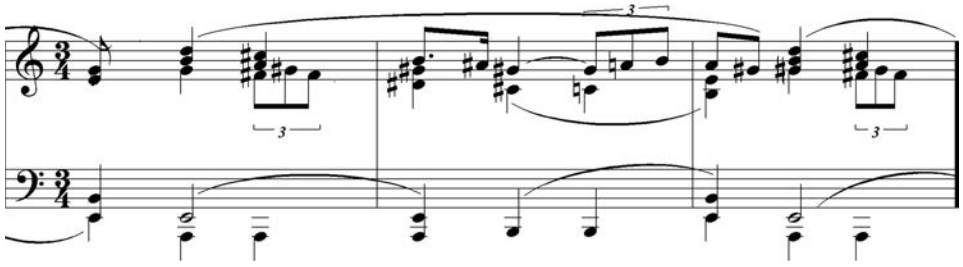
In Szymanowski, this idea goes even further. He not only often uses reverse-dotted rhythms, as mentioned earlier, but he also frequently accents the very last sixteenth note of a measure. This highly non-traditional use of weak beats proves the revolutionary character of these rhythmic patterns. For example:

Example 85. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 2; mm. 37–40.



Szymanowski also expands the idea of rhythmic diversity, adding a new aspect to phrasing. For Szymanowski, the bar line is only a measurement for organizing beats; it is not used as a sign of the beginning or the end of phrases.

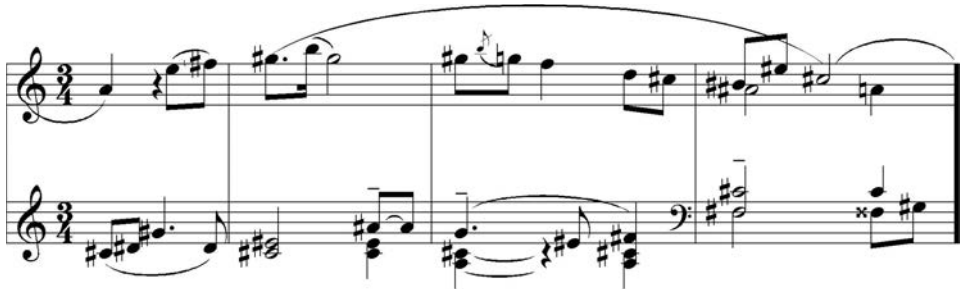
Example 86. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 1; mm. 37–39



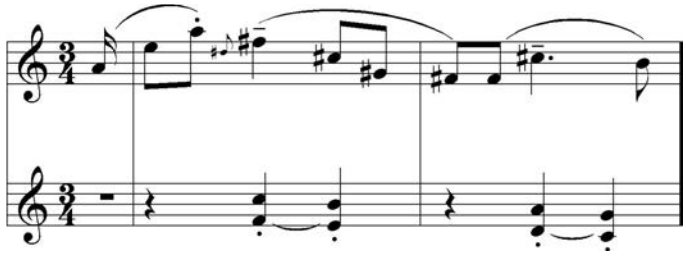
The diversity and the complex nature of the rhythmic patterns is enriched by the notion of shifting accents and enhanced through the use of slurs and ties, new additions to the mazurka genre. The importance of slurs and their interpretation in conjunction with the metric and rhythmic patterns in Szymanowski is noteworthy.

The slur can be compared to a pattern of declamation in speech. It underscores the punctuation and exposes what are at times hidden elements in music, while at the same time shaping the narrative character of a given composition.

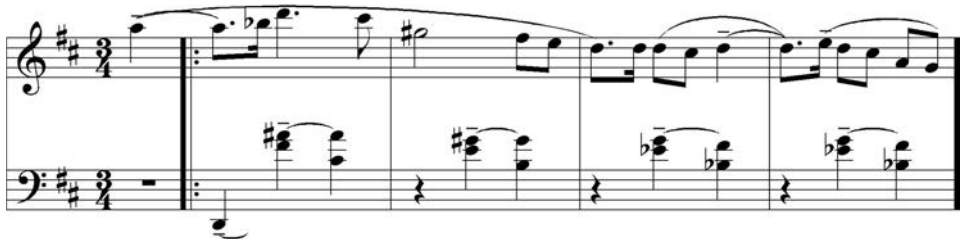
Example 87. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 3; mm. 9–12



Example 88. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 19; mm. 1–2

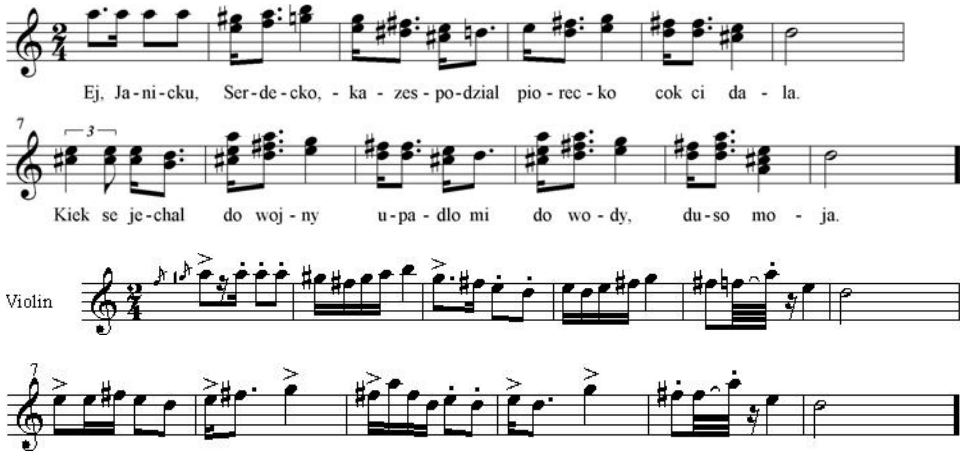


Example 89. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 15; mm. 1–4



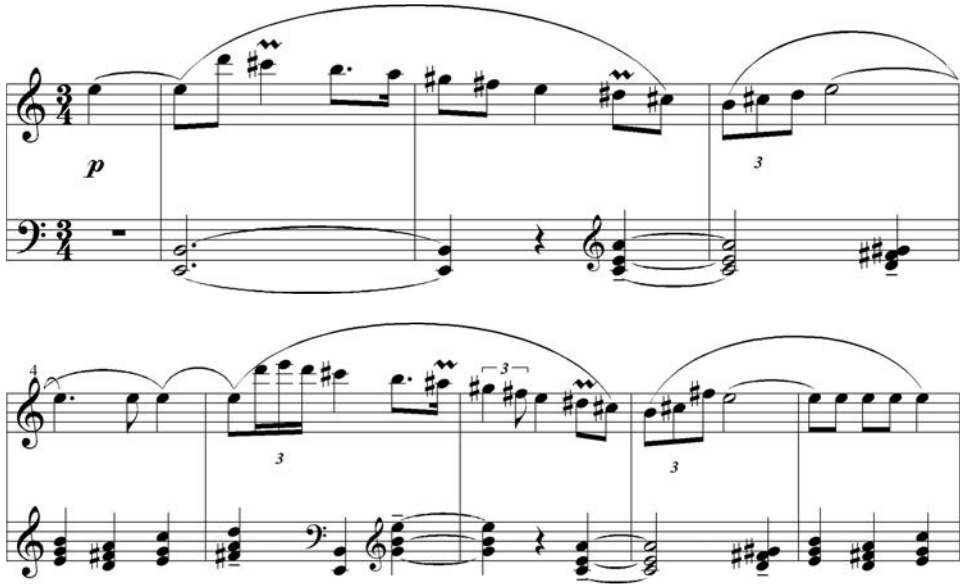
Ornamentation and the use of variation technique are other aspects and influences of Podhale music on the mazurkas. It is a well-known fact that *góral* music is an improvisation based upon a given tune. For example:

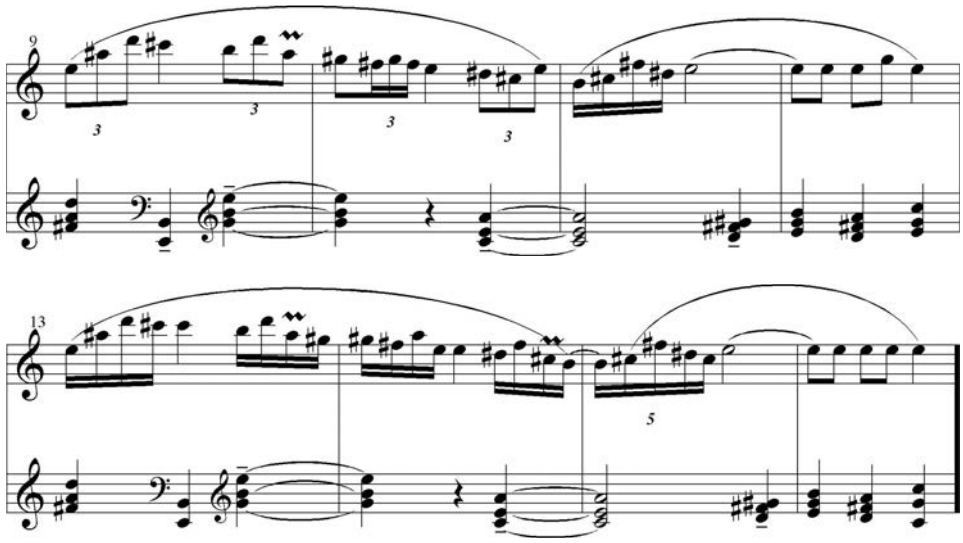
Example 90. Kotoński, *Ozwodny 12. Ej, Janicku Serdecko Przyśpiewka*



Alternatively, the improvisation in Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* is transformed into a compositional technique, namely that of variation. The most interesting example is found in the first *Mazurka.*

Example 91. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 1





B. Form, Proportions, and Phrase Structure

Form

The modernist approach with regard to rhythmic patterns and the treatment of rests in Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*, while being inspired by Podhale music, is balanced by a traditional and Classical approach with regard to form. Unlike Szymanowski's *Methopes* or *Masks*, the *Mazurkas* are representative of a Classical approach, and reflect *die Neue Sachklichkeit* and the Neoclassicist trends of the 1920s. One must not forget that the first twelve-tone composition was introduced in the form of a Baroque suite, and Debussy's last compositions were in the form of a sonata. For Szymanowski, the simplicity of the *Mazurka* dance form allowed him a new kind of expression. As in Schoenberg's *Minuet*, one finds in some of the *Mazurkas* a Classical structure. An overwhelming majority of the dances are in the ternary, ABA + Coda design. As in Chopin's *Mazurkas*, one can find some modification of the form, yet unlike in Chopin's dances, Szymanowski rarely uses exact repetitions of the material. Instead, he resorts to variation technique, a technique highly prevalent in Podhale music.

In many of the *Mazurkas*, the form displays perfect proportions and a symmetry of the parts. Ten of the *Mazurkas* of op. 50 and both the *Mazurkas* of op. 62 are built on an ABA form where B exceeds the size of A, and three of op. 50 are built on the opposite idea: with A lengthier than B. Two of

the *Mazurkas* consist of an ABA with an almost even distribution of the measures between the parts (no. 4 and 20), and three mazurkas show a degree of irregularity in the proportions within the ABA design (no. 3, 6, and 7). One *Mazurka* is in rondo form (ABAB) based on the symmetrical shape of 28 : 24 : 28 : 24 (no. 2). And finally, one is in rounded binary form (no. 11).

Mazurkas ABA, where B is longer than A

In op. 50		
No. 1	16–20–16	
No. 5	23–39–23.5	Coda
No. 8	32–40–32	Coda
No. 9	27–58–27	
No. 13	30–42–30	
No. 14	30–38–29	
No. 15	16–42–16	
No. 17	25–35–25	
No. 18	49–55–49	Coda
No. 19	20–22–20	
In op. 62		
No. 1	22–34–22	
No. 2	25–32–25	

Mazurkas ABA, where A is longer than B

No. 10	48–17–48	
No. 12	65–24–63	
No. 16	52–20–52	Coda

Mazurkas with equal parts: A=B=A

No. 4	34–34–34	
No. 20	45–45–43	Coda

Mazurkas in rondo form ABA′B′

No. 2	28–24–28–24	Coda

Mazurkas in rounded binary form

No. 11 22–22–11

Mazurkas in ABA where A does not equal A′

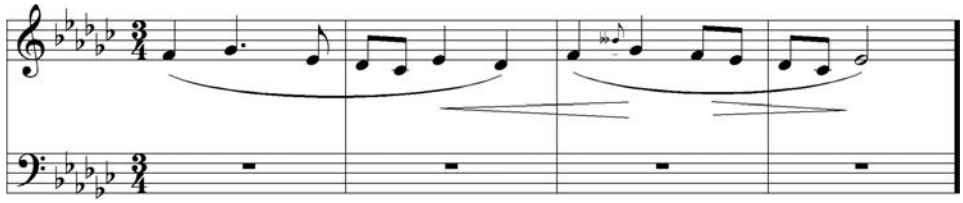
No. 3	29–22–26	
No. 6	44–25–23	Coda
No. 7	32–22–25	

Even though there is no apparent symmetry between the larger sections of *Mazurka* no. 3 or 7, it is present within the sections themselves. For example, the first A section in *Mazurka* no. 7 has a "call" of five measures + 5–17–5 structure, and the second A section displays a 4–17–4 structure, while the B section is built on an 8–8–3–3 relationship. In the case of the third *Mazurka*, the micro-organization between the sections is obstructed (A = 9 + 14 + 6; A′ = 8 + 10 + 8), but the symmetry is present in the phrase structure of the A′ section. *Mazurka* no. 6 is another example of irregularity and lack of ordered proportions between the sections. However, the A and A′ sections, each being 23-measures long (19 + 4 measures), consist of the same musical material, which appears twice (with some variations) only in the A section.

When talking about the form of the *Mazurkas*, it is essential to mention another influence that Podhale music exerted on this aspect of the compositions. A large portion of the dances and songs of the Highlanders begin with a *przyśpiewka,* which is essentially a one-stanza couplet.

For example:

E x a m p l e 92. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 13; mm. 1–4



Although the main body of a *przyśpiewka* is based on the same melody, it differs in tempo and character. It is treated as a vocal improvisation over the main tune, after which the main dance is introduced.

The structure of the *przyśpiewka*-dance can be found in several of Szymanowski's *Mazurkas.* However, the ABA design interferes to some degree with the "introduction-dance" idea because of its repetition after the B section. Nonetheless, the improvisatory character and slower tempo at the beginning of several of the *Mazurkas* suggest the influence of *góral* music. It is evident in the following *Mazurkas*:

Op. 50:
No. 1 mm. 1–16
No. 3 mm. 1–9
No. 5 mm. 1–9
No. 7 mm. 1–10
No. 8 mm. 1–8
No. 9 mm. 1–9
No. 11 mm. 1–11
No. 12 mm. 1–23
No. 13 mm. 1–30
No.15 mm. 1–16 Repeat Sign A section
No. 16 mm. 1–15 Repeat Sign B section
No. 17 mm. 1–7 Repeat Sign A section
No. 19 mm. 1–4

Op. 62
No. 2 mm. 1–7

Szymanowski innovatively expands the "introduction-dance" idea to a larger form, creating in some cases separate sections based on the introductory material. Only in the case of *Mazurka* no. 8 is the introduction material used in the section following the *przyśpiewka.* In several of the *Mazurkas* the repeat signs appear within the A section (no. 15 and 17) or the B section (no. 16). As with the rhythmic patterns, Szymanowski shows strong folk influences. These influences, combined with Neoclassical tendencies with regard to form, helped to create his distinctive music, which is not an adaptation of any specific kind of folk material, but rather its reflection in a new style.

Proportions

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the majority of Szymanowski's dances display a perfect balance between the sections and proportions with regard to form. It is a rule rather than an exception that in a three-part design A equals A′ in length. There are even examples of all three sections (A = B = A′) being equal. In many instances this is not too different from Bach's approach. The *Minuet* from the *French Suite in E major* is a perfect example of balance, exhibiting the 1 : 2 proportion of harmonic movement. This rounded binary piece is built upon perfectly symmetrical sections: 8 + (8 + 8). Although the inner design of the sections displays only even-numbered phrases, measures 17–24 show the maximum variation and alteration of the phrase structure design. The inner phrase construction of this section is based upon 2 + 6 rather than a 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 design, as was the case in the outer sections.

Szymanowski once again resorts to a traditional approach to form and proportions and bases his structures on similar types of symmetry. Bach's model where A = A′ in micro-organization can be found in a number of Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*: nos. 2 (A sections only), 4, 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 19, and 20. Examples of a Classical design with perfect outer, but not inner proportions can be found in many 18th-century compositions, as in the Minuet of Haydn's *Piano Sonata XVI*: 27, to cite one example. The outer proportions of the rounded binary movement display the same design of 1 : 2 (14 : 28 measures) found in Bach. However, the inner proportions are not equal. This demonstrates a new formal design that Szymanowski borrowed from the Classical style but rediscovered through folk music, adopting it into his *Mazurkas*. Consequently, a significant number of his *Mazurkas*' formal organization often differs on the micro level within the phrase structure. The smaller units are shifted and regrouped, creating new sections based on familiar elements.

In *Mazurka* no. 18, for example, section A = A′, each being 49-measures long. The rhythmic structure of the first fifteen measures in each of the sections, however, differs considerably. The A section consists of 4 + 3 + 4 + 3 + 2, while the A′ section is built upon a chain of mostly two-measure units: 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 4 + 3. A similar tendency can be observed in no. 12 where each of the almost equal length A sections (A = 65, but with a three-measure introduction; A′ = 63) is built upon a significantly different phrase structure design. Section A is in a ternary form where A almost equals A′ (23–17–25). The A′ section, on the other hand, is almost entirely based on symmetrical phrase structure, but displays a diametrically different design: 16 + 16 + 12 + 1 + 18. A similar

example can be found in no. 2, which is in a rondo form ABA′B′ (28 + 24 + 28 + 24) + Coda. Both A sections are equal in length and identical in their rhythmic micro-organization. This is not the case, however, with the B sections. The first B section is built on an 8 + 8 + 8 design, but the B′ section manifests irregularity. It consists of an 8 + 4 + 2 + 4 + 3 + 3 structure.

A reverse situation can be observed in the *Mazurkas*' design in which the outer proportions are not equal but there is significant symmetry in micro-organizational design within the sections. In *Mazurka* no. 3 (A: 29; B: 22; A′: 26), the A′ section is built upon an aba (a=8; b=10; a′=8) design, with the b section having a palindromic internal organization: b=3+2+2+3. Another interesting example of Szymanowski's innovative approach to form can be found in *Mazurka* no. 7, where A and A′ manifest the same principle of design even though they differ in length:

A ('call' (*przyśpiewka*) = 5m; a=5; b=17; a′=5) A′ (a=4; b=17; a′=4).

It is also significant that the micro-organization of the phrasal and rhythmic structure within the inner (b) sections is identical: 4 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 1. Here, Szymanowski adds five extra measures at the beginning of the composition, which to me suggests the "call" (*przyśpiewka*), or "invitation" to the main dance.

The *Mazurkas* display much concern for varied kinds of organizational symmetry and demonstrate Szymanowski's innovative approach to composition, while turning to both Bach's style and Classical models for inspiration with regard to form and proportions.

Phrase Structure

The symmetrical phrase structures typical of Chopin's models are rarely present in Szymanowski's compositions. Chopin's

> dominant pattern of the strophe (. . .) with the sixteen-measure segment consisting of four four-measure phrases[6]

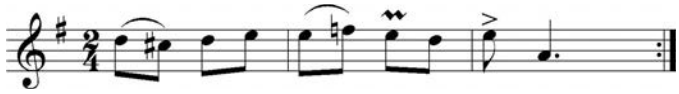
is present only in the A section of the first *Mazurka*. Typically, Szymanowski rarely follows the Classical approach to slurring, which corresponds with the metric organization. The slur takes on a significant function among articulation marks in Szymanowski's music, in a way that is similar to Chopin's ap-

[6] Elżbieta Witkowska-Zaremba, "Versification, Syntax and Form in Chopin's Mazurkas," *Polish Music Journal* 3, no. 1 (summer 2000) www.usc.edu/dept/polish_music/PMJ, 5/2/002, ISSN 1521-6039.

proach. Szymanowski's slur indications can and should be taken into serious consideration in a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of his *Mazurkas*.

Here, Szymanowski once again adopts the structure of Podhale music, frequently basing his compositions on a five-, six- or seven-measure phrase model. However, some scholars notice a difference between the asymmetrical phrase structure of Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* and Podhale music. According to Bielawski, the five-measure phrase structure of Podhale music is built upon a 3 + 2 scheme, the second part being the rhythmic augmentation of the preceding measure. In other words, in Podhale music the asymmetrical phrase structure is often built upon the addition of one or two measures to the basic, smaller phrase unit. In the case of a three-measure structure this means 2 + 1.

E x a m p l e 93. Mierczyński, no. 22; *Janosikowa*

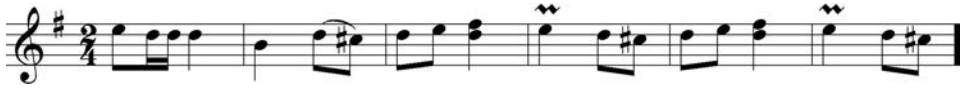


In the case of a five-measure structure, 3 + 2.

E x a m p l e 94. Mierczyński, no. 57; *Ozwodna*

Bielawski considers the six-measure phrase structure an extension of a three-measure pattern with the addition of three measures: 3 + 2 + 1.

E x a m p l e 95. Mierczyński, no. 6; *Sabalowa*

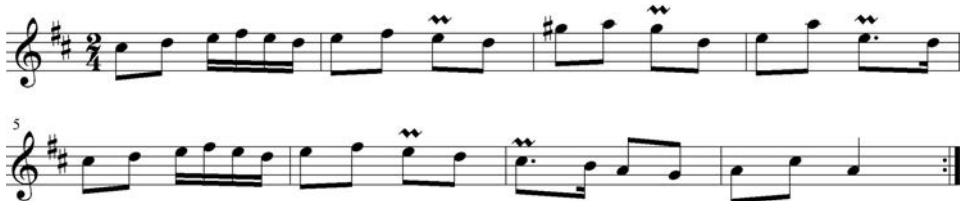


Most of the examples in Mierczynski's and Kotoński's collections suggest a different pattern for the six-measure structure, 3 + 3:

Example 96. Mierczyński, no. 51; *Ozwodna*

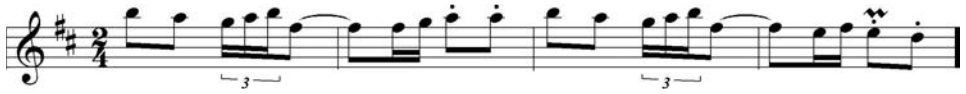
However, Bielawski's comments about the eight-measure structure correspond with my analysis of Podhale music. The pattern of the eight-measure structure is as follows: 2 + 2 + 2 + 2.

Example 97. Mierczyński, no. 64; *Drobny Zakopiański*



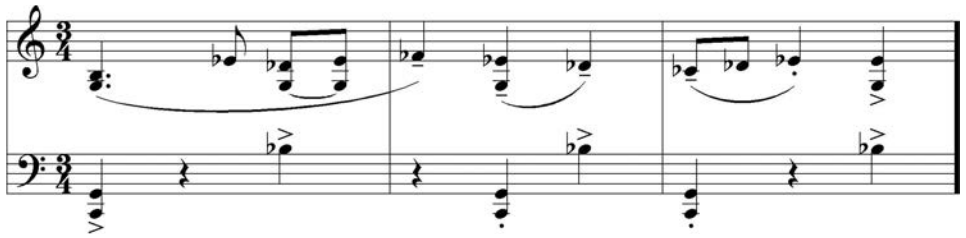
The four-measure structure, although rare in Podhale music, adopts a parallel structure consisting of two two-measure phrases.

Example 98. Mierczyński, no. 71; *Krzesany Zakopiański*

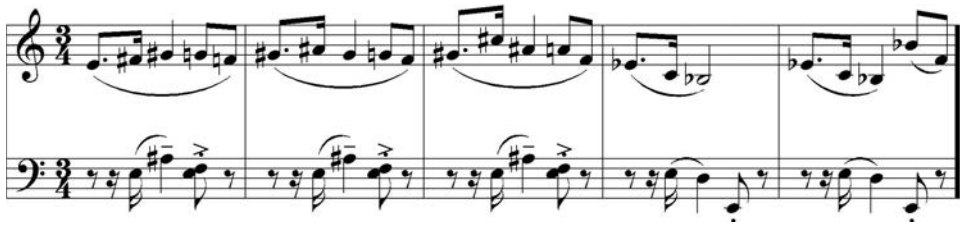


In Szymanowski's compositions, the three-measure phrase structure is often used, especially in connection with the two- or four-measure structure. There is only one example of a section built exclusively on the three-measure structure: the B section from *Mazurka* no. 19.

Example 99. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 19; mm. 25–27

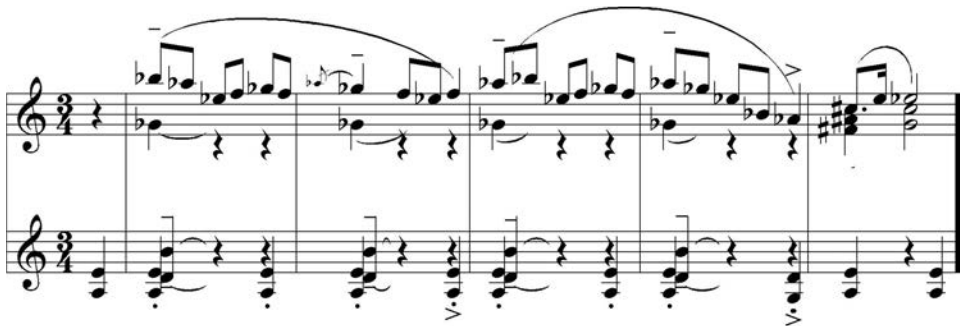


E x a m p l e 100. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 5; mm. 1–5
3 + 2

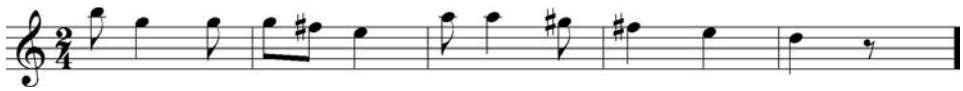


Szymanowski extends the four-measure structure by adding one measure to this symmetrical construction. This practice is also common in the music of Podhale.

E x a m p l e 101. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 7; mm. 1–5
4 + 1

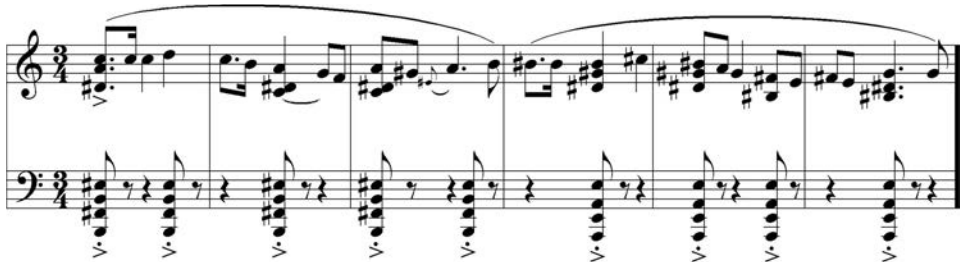


E x a m p l e 102. Kotoński, no. 2; *Ozwodna*



Taking this further, Szymanowski also adopts the six-measure structure from Góral music.

Example 103. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 3; mm. 30–35

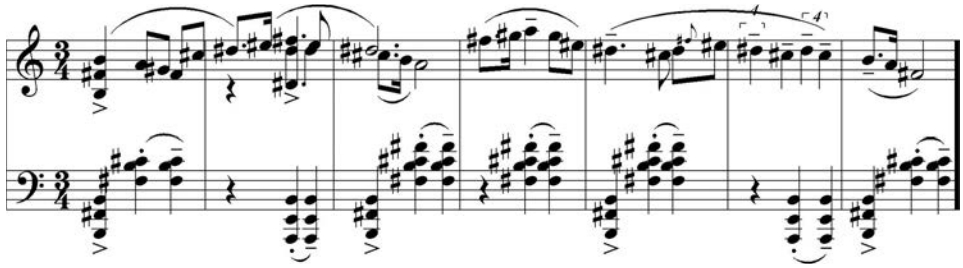


Example 104. Mierczyński, no. 51; *Ozwodna*

The seven-measure structure in Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* consisting of a 3 + 4 measure organization once again has its roots in Podhale folk music, as shown in Example 128.

Seven measures (3 + 4)

Example 105. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 16; mm. 1–7

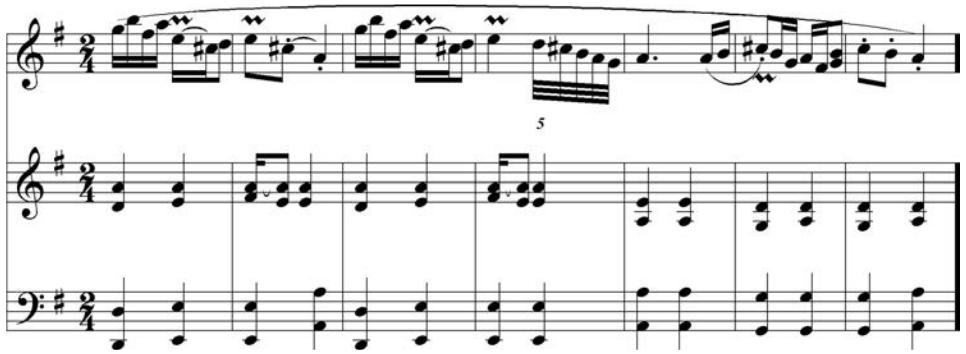


In Podhale, one can find a reverse structure, 4 + 3, an example being *Sabałowa* no. 7 in the Mierczyński collection (see also *Do Zbójnickiego* [For the Zbójnicki dance] no. 96).

The four-measure phrase structure, which dominates in Chopin's *Mazurkas*, is present in Szymanowski's collection only in the A section of *Mazurkas* nos. 1, 2, 13, and 15, the B section of *Mazurkas* nos. 1 and 16, and with some modification in no. 17. It is remarkable that both Szymanowski and Chopin

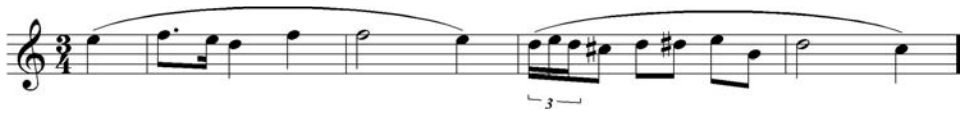
use the two-measure parallel structure along with a four-measure structure; this design is especially prominent in the first *Mazurka* from Szymanowski's op. 62, which is exclusively built upon that pattern.

E x a m p l e 106. Mierczyński, no. 7; *Sabałowa*

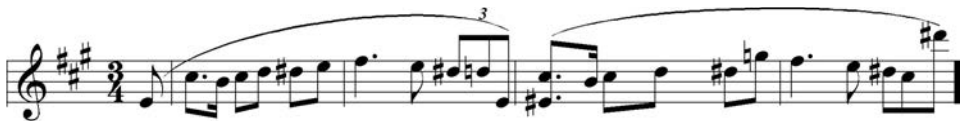


Parallel Structure

E x a m p l e 107. Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 7 no. 2; mm. 1–2

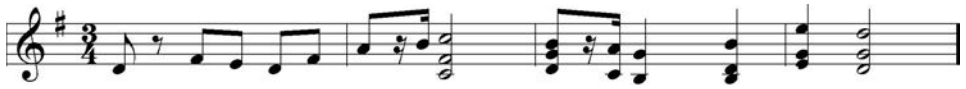


E x a m p l e 108. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 62 no. 1; mm. 1–4

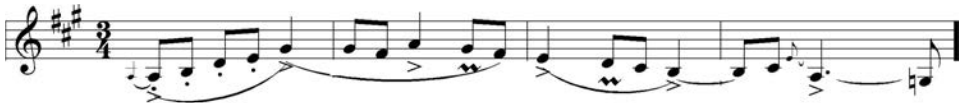


However, not every four-measure structure is based on parallelism and repetition.

E x a m p l e 109. Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 1; mm. 1–4



Example 110. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 2; mm. 1–4



The phrase structure in Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* displays the composer's interest in maximum variation within traditional parameters. Although his rediscovery of "Classicism" in regard to form rarely comes to the fore through his choice of phrase structures, and even though symmetry is more of an exception than the norm here, it does exist in other aspects of the music. To sum up, the perfect four-measure structure is present only in a few *Mazurkas.* However, its modification based on an eight-measure structure, or as a succession of two-measure structures, is not exceptional. Szymanowski frequently combines odd- and even-numbered phrase structures into a unified composition, where traditional thinking meets a more modernist interpretation. Undoubtedly, the use of asymmetrical phrase structures has its roots in Podhale music; but Szymanowski adopts the idea and transforms it into his vision of modernity, where two worlds, the old and the new, can meet.

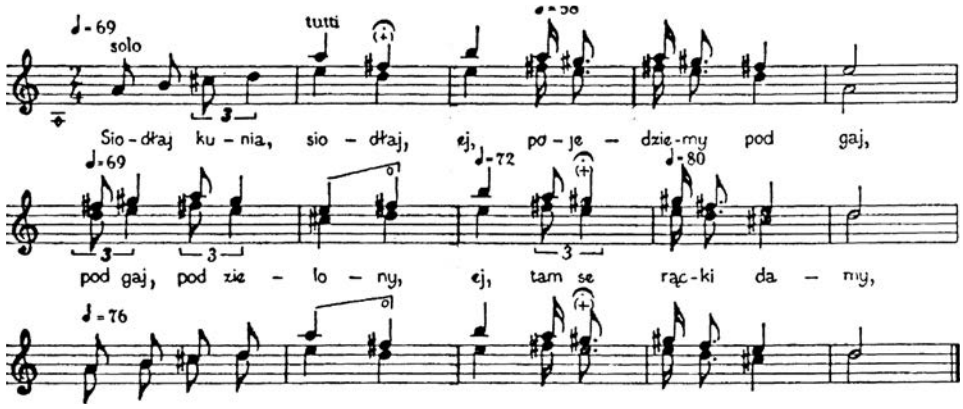
C. Texture, Accompaniment Patterns, and Articulation

Texture

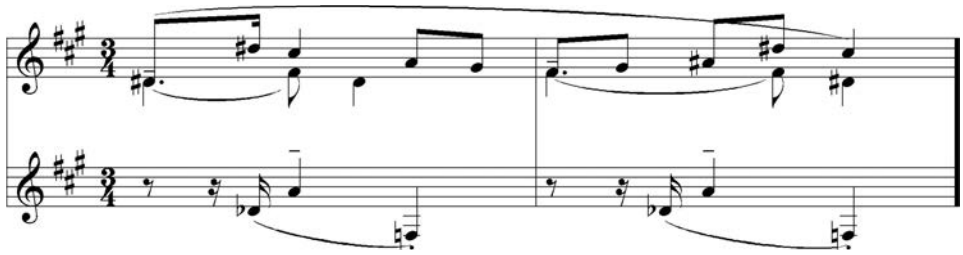
The complexity of the rhythmic patterns and the presence of polyrhythmic textures inherent to the Polish folk mazur*,* as previously mentioned in Chapter 4A, correspond to the uniqueness and complexity of the texture in Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*. Although the composer chooses to adopt a significant number of the traditional features of the folk dance, he certainly does not follow Chopin's model with regard to texture. Consequently, instead of finding the homophonic texture predominant in Chopin's well-known compositions, one finds a variety of textures ranging from unison to polyphony. These new textures correspond clearly with the trends associated with Neoclassicism and *die Neue Sachlichkeit*. They also help bring to light the essence of Podhale folk music.

Most Polish folk songs are sung either by a solo voice[7] or in unison;[8] multi-part singing is present only in the Highland region of Poland. Multi-part singing can be traced to two practices from the Middle Ages, *organum,* where a second voice was added at a fixed interval of a fifth from the melody, or in an alternate form called *cantus gemellus* where the second voice could be added above or below the melody in the fixed interval of a third, constantly crossing its register. The second practice was much more common in Góral music and has survived up to the present day with the rare addition of the interval of a fourth. Not surprisingly, the characteristic voice crossings and instances of unison singing in keeping with this old practice can be easily found in Szymanowski's compositions (voice crossing: Example 112; unison, Example 115).

E x a m p l e 111. Choral singing and unison singing in Podhale music. Kotoński



E x a m p l e 112. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 17; mm. 1–2



[7] Ludwig Bielawski, *Tradycje ludowe w kulturze muzycznej.* [Folk traditions in musical culture.] (Warszawa: Instytut Sztuki PAN, 1999), 203.

[8] Jadwiga Bobrowska, *Polska folklorystyka muzyczna.* [Polish musical folk studies.] (Katowice: Akademia Muzyczna im. K. Szymanowskiego, 2000), 288.

Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* demonstrate the potential hidden within the simplicity of folk dances and their powerful authenticity. Undoubtedly, Szymanowski's new way of working with the dances was driven and inspired by the Góral music that was all around him, both instrumental and vocal. A friend of his, Jerzy Mieczysław Rytard, describes one of the many evenings Szymanowski spent with the prominent Podhale musician, Bartek Obrochta:

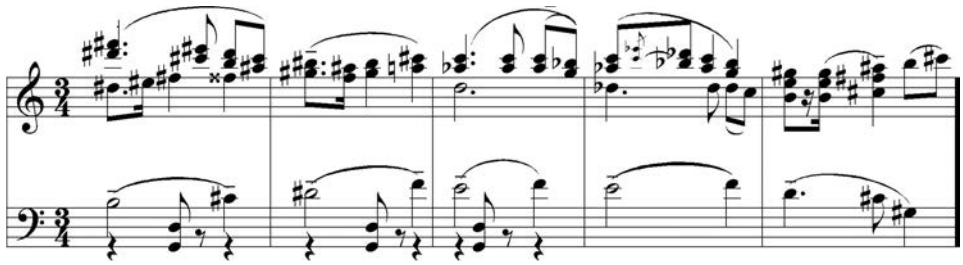
> Karol walked around the vast room, listening, looking at the musicians' fingers, trying to catch every interesting and original moment, digesting and analyzing every element of the music and the performance. He and Staś Mierczyński were in their element.[9]
> (Karol chodził po obszernej izbie (. . .) I słuchał, patrzył na palce muzykantom, nadstawiał ucha w ciekawszych, oryginalniejszych miejscach, rozbierał na poszczególne elementy. Obaj ze Stasiem Mierczyńskim byli w swoim żywiole.)

In *Meetings with Karol Szymanowski* (in Polish), Jarosław Iwawszkiewicz describes another of these moments amidst Podhale music:

> Karol could not come down. The melodies and harmonies were going deep inside him, and he could never free himself from them until the end of his life.[10]
> (Karol nie mógł się uspokoić z zachwytu. Melodie te i harmonie przenikały go do głębi i już do końca życia nie mógł się od nich obronić.)

This fascination with instrumental music featuring a clear three- or four-part texture is frequently evident in Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*. For instance:

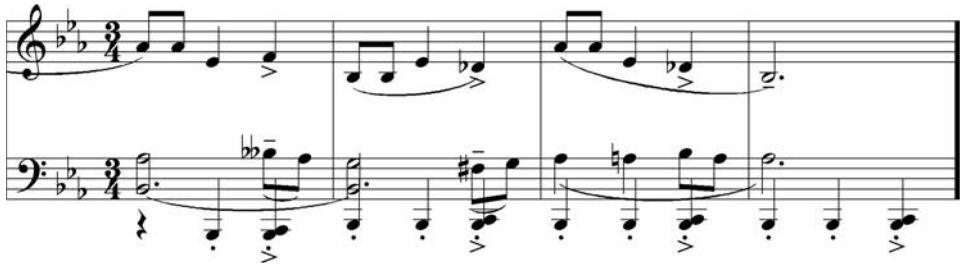
Example 113. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 11; mm. 13–16



[9] Jerzy Mieczysław Rytard, *Wspomnienia o Karolu Szymanowskim* [Remembrances of Karol Szymanowski] (Kraków: PWM, 1947), 13.

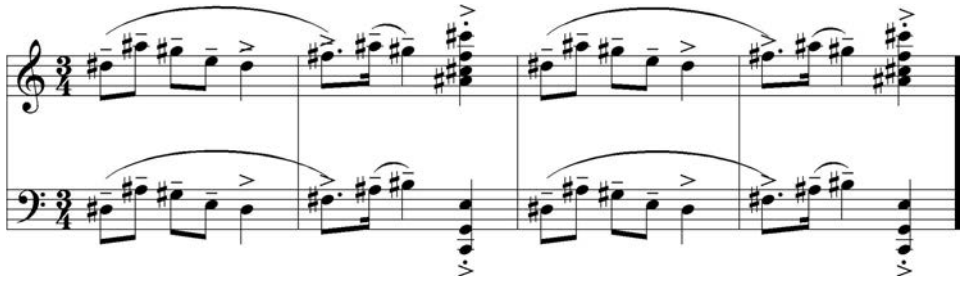
[10] Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, *Spotkania z Karolem Szymanowskim* [Meetings with Karol Szymanowski] (Kraków: PWM, 1976), 84.

Example 114. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 12; mm. 20–23

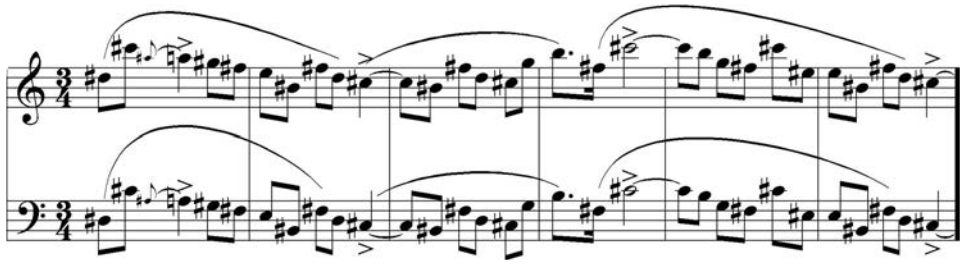


Examples of vocal music influenced by unison singing also abound. This is likely an illustration of the adaptation of vocal and instrumental music into the genre.

Example 115. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 9; mm. 36–39



Example 116. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 16; mm. 40–45



The texture of Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* ranges from unison to three- or four-part polyphonic settings. This highly individual approach to texture in the mazurka form inspired by Podhale music attests yet again to Szymanowski's innovative and artistic personality, and paved the way toward a modern style of Polish music.

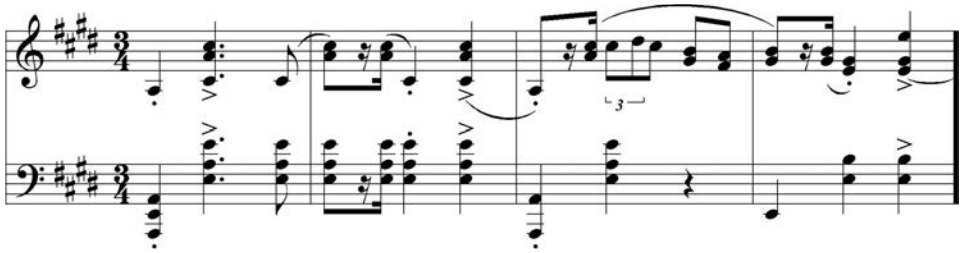
Accompaniment Patterns

Much has been said about the tonal structure and stylization of folk material in Chopin's *Mazurkas* but there is little mention of the accompaniment patterns which underlie the compositions. As in the case of the vast majority of Romantic music, including Chopin's *Mazurkas*, the accompaniment-related figures, usually in the left hand, are designed to function mostly as harmonic support for the higher melody.

Example 117. Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 17 no. 4; mm. 4–8

In many instances the left hand function is also meant to imitate the character of the dance by adding rhythmic drive, or in some cases, by portraying the idea of "jumps" in the air.

Example 118. Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 3; mm. 17–20



We know very little about the accompaniment patterns of Lowland music. For the most part, surviving materials only concentrate on the main melody – a one-line structure – and the music itself is not performed; by contrast, performances of Podhale music continue to be an element of everyday life. Therefore it is impossible to compare Chopin's *Mazurka* accompaniment patterns with those of the instrumental or vocal folk music. It is possible, however, to observe a very close relationship between the Podhale music accompaniments and those in Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*.

As was discussed in the third chapter, the Podhale band usually consists of three sections: Violin I, Violin II (often performed by two violinists), and the

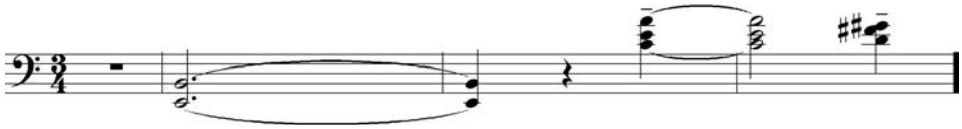
bass section. This three- and four-part texture influenced the accompaniment patterns, and this is evident in some of the *Mazurkas*, as in nos. 7 and 17.

On the basis of my observations, the accompaniment patterns can be divided into several groups, each representing a highly unique form which is largely new to previous settings of the *Mazurka* genre.

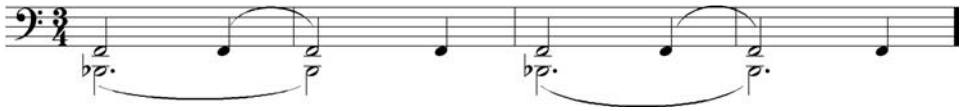
1. Harmonic Accompaniment Pattern

Very often this type of pattern is limited to a "grounding" fifth in long notes, acting like a drone, as in the case of the first *Mazurka*.

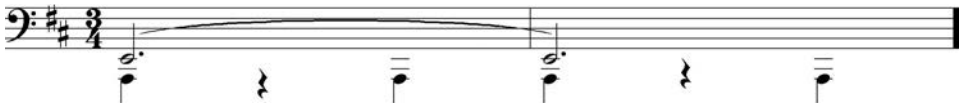
E x a m p l e 119. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 1; mm. 1–2



E x a m p l e 120. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 18; mm. 59–62



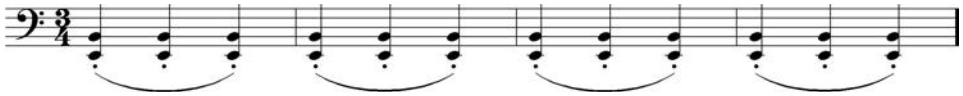
E x a m p l e 121. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 15; mm. 9–10



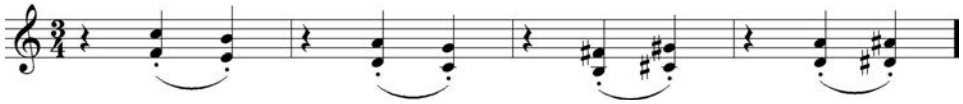
2. Pizzicato-Ostinato Accompaniment Pattern

This pattern is undoubtedly adapted from string instruments and is one of the effects most frequently used by Szymanowski. It is featured in almost every *Mazurka*, and its various forms can be found in no. 1 m. 17; no. 2 m. 9; no. 11 m. 1 and 12.

Example 122. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 1; mm. 17–20



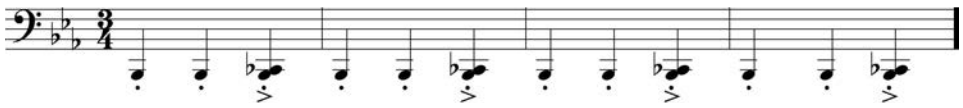
Example 123. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 19; mm. 1–4



Szymanowski begins two of his *Mazurkas* with a similar pizzicato pattern: nos. 11 and 12.

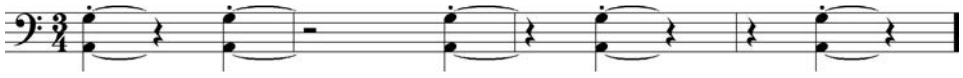
Example 124. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 11; mm. 1–4

Example 125. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 12; mm. 1–4

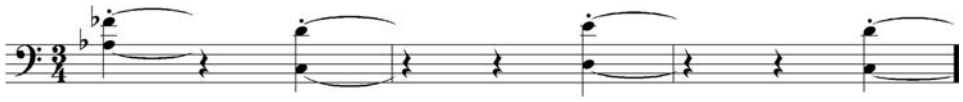


3. Spare Slurred-Pizzicato Pattern

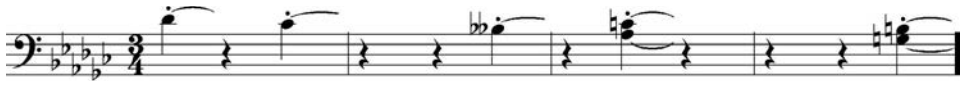
Example 126. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 3; mm. 70–72



Example 127. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 9; mm. 104–107



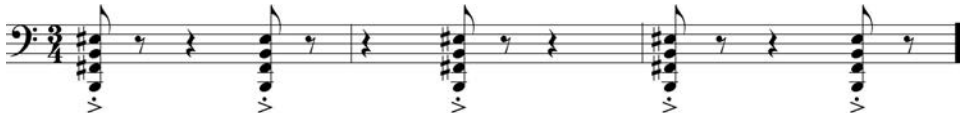
Example 128. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 13; mm. 5–8



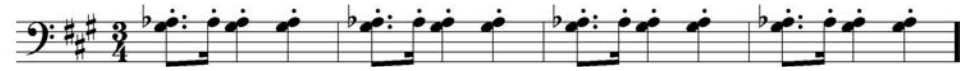
4. Rhythmic-Dance Accompaniment Pattern

This can be found in many *Mazurkas* and its role is limited to supporting and illustrating the drive of the fast dances such as *Góralski*, *Zbójnicki*, or *Mazurka*.

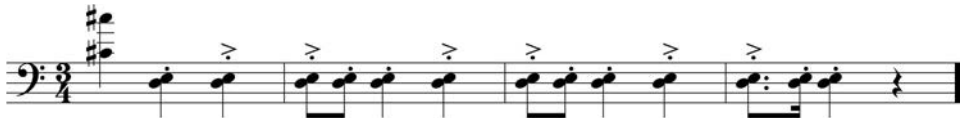
Example 129. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 3; mm. 30–35



Example 130. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 2; mm. 9–12

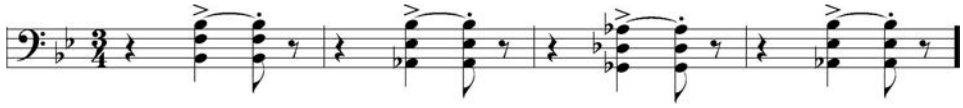


Example 131. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 16; mm. 16–19

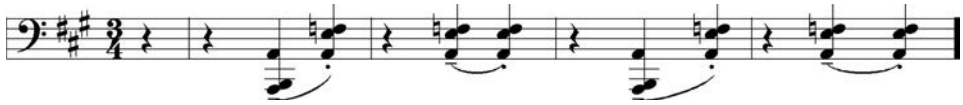


5. Slur Accompaniment Pattern from Bowing

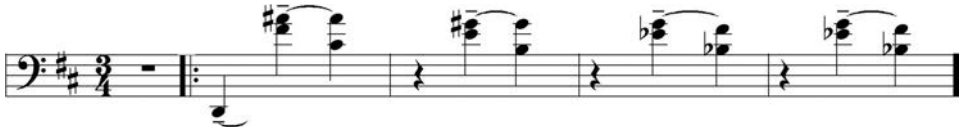
Example 132. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 4; mm. 1–4



Example 133. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 8; mm. 1–4

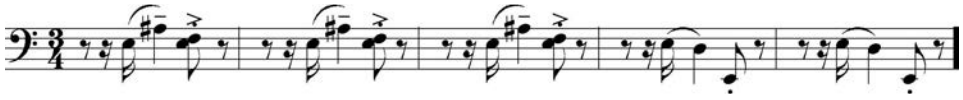


Example 134. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 15; mm. 1–4

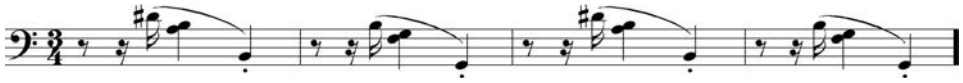


6. Short Values Slur Pattern

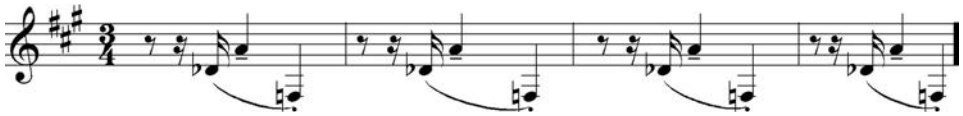
Example 135. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 5; mm. 1–4



Example 136. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 9; mm. 63–66

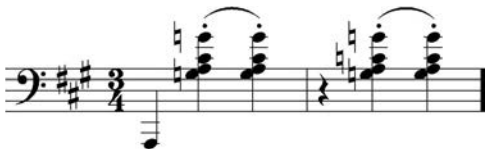


Example 137. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 17; mm. 1–4

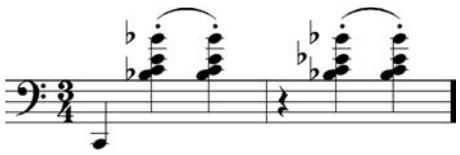


7. Waltz-Like Accompaniment Pattern

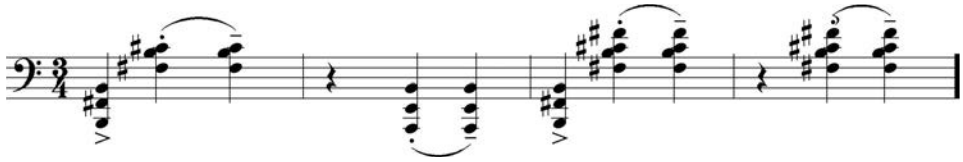
Example 138. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 2; mm. 53–54



Example 139. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 12; mm. 112–113

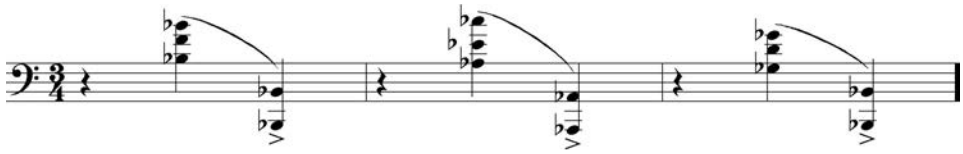


Example 140. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 16; mm. 1–4



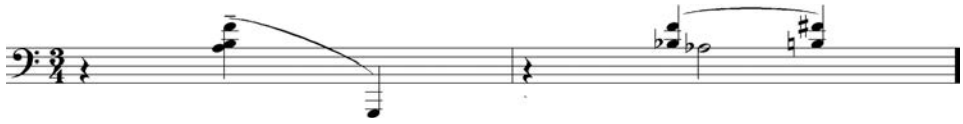
8. Leap Pattern
   A. Descending Leap

Example 141. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 8; mm. 61–63



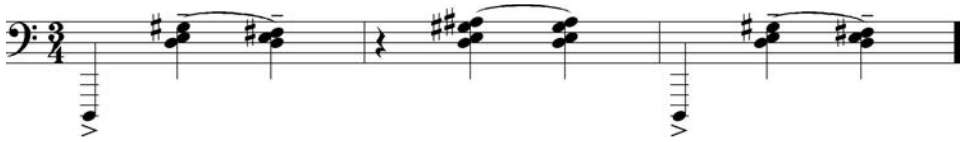
Example 142. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 8; mm. 61–63

Example 143. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 60 no. 2; mm. 3–4

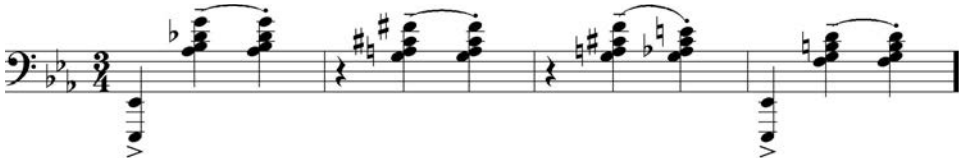


   B. Ascending Leap

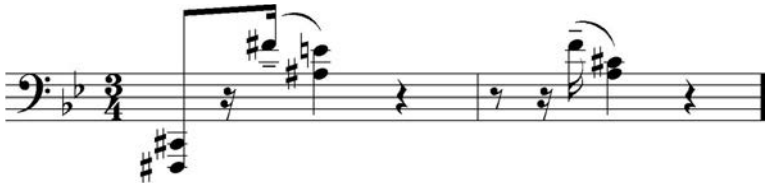
Example 144. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 12; mm. 98–100



Example 145. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 14; mm. 89–91



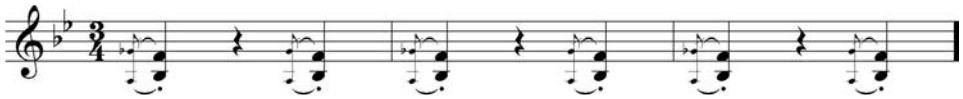
Example 146. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 17; mm. 48–49



9. Ornament-Figure Accompaniment Pattern

Example 147. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 2; mm. 105–106

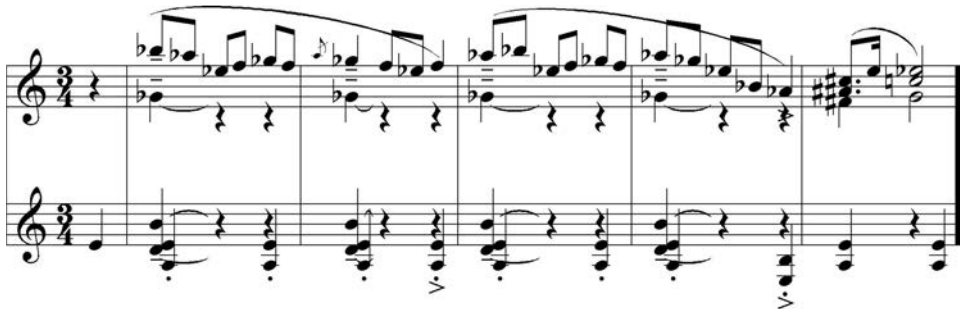
Example 148. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 6; mm. 42–45



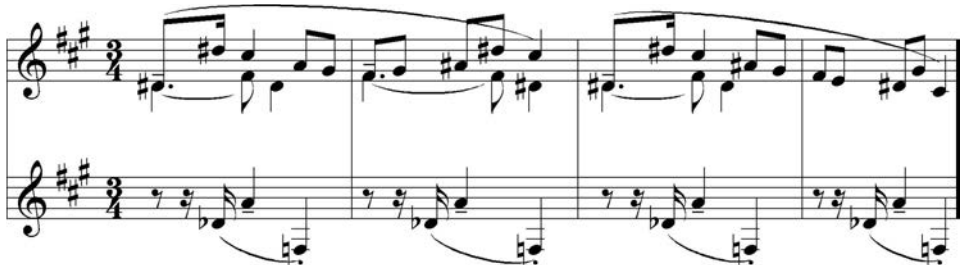
Example 149. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 11; mm. 35–38

10. Multi-Voice Pattern

E x a m p l e 150. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 7; mm. 1–5

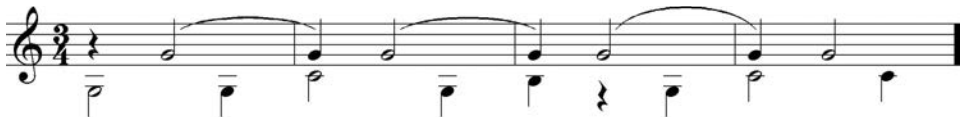


E x a m p l e 151. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 17; mm. 1–4



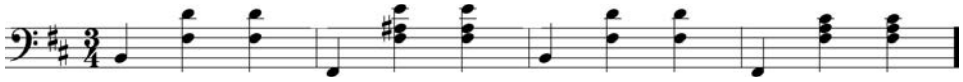
The accompaniment patterns found in Chopin's *Mazurkas* are not nearly as diverse and complex as the ones found in Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*. The former lack the influence of string instruments, are more pianistic, and less varied. Nonetheless, some similarities can be found. For example, although Chopin does not use the "grounding" fifth pattern, he does use a very similar long-note harmonic accompaniment pattern.

E x a m p l e 152. Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 33 no. 3; mm. 1–4

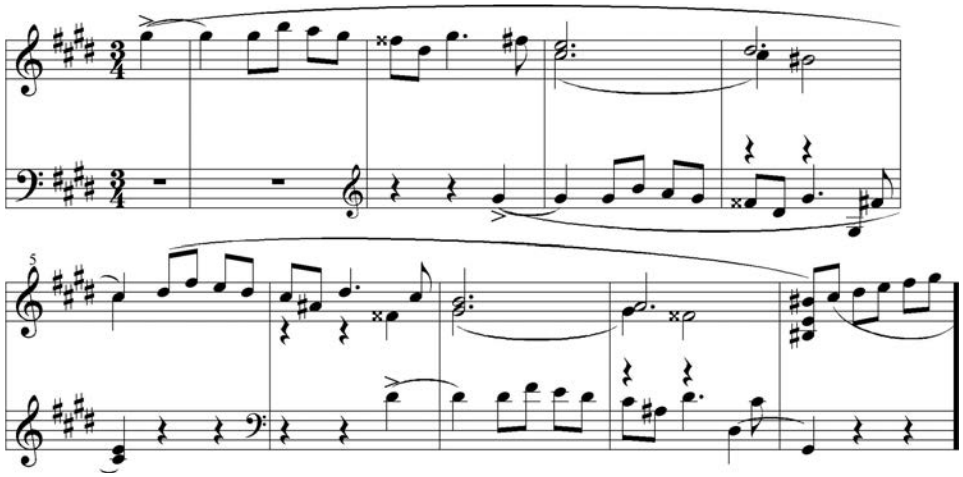


Likewise, waltz-like accompaniment patterns (Example 154), multi-layer patterns (Example 155), dance-driven patterns (Example 156), and leap patterns (Example 157) can be found in Chopin's *Mazurkas*.

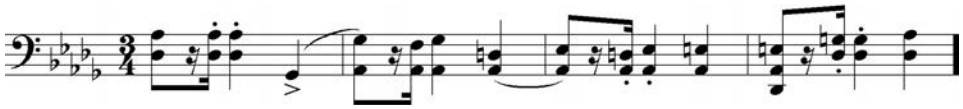
Example 153. Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 30 no. 2; mm. 1–4



Example 154. Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 3; mm. 1–8



Example 155. Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 2; mm. 60–63



Example 156. Chopin, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 4; mm. 33–36

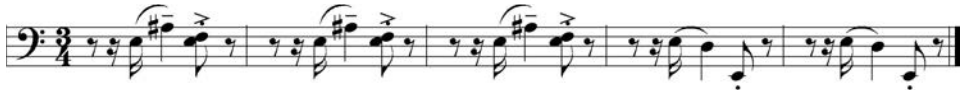
Although Chopin operates with similar musical elements such as leaps or harmonic support patterns, it is clear that his compositions were written strictly for piano and did not intend to represent the techniques and timbres inherent to other instruments. Chopin's *Mazurkas* are a Romantic version of various Lowland folk dances and are devoid of any "vulgarity." The accompaniment patterns in Szymanowski's compositions, on the other hand, openly imitate the character of Podhale music with its harsh and driven sounds and clearly show

modern thinking quite removed from staid 19th-century traditions. Together with the rhythmic patterns and articulations, they demonstrate the distinctive elements of the modernist approach to the compositional process. In regard to rhythm and articulation, Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* not only differ greatly from those of Chopin, but they also bring out one of the most individual and innovative aspects of his works.

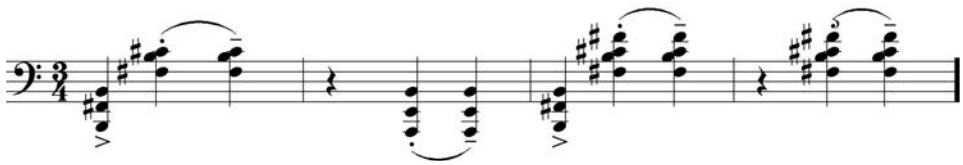
Articulation

As mentioned earlier, while Szymanowski's dances come close to Chopin's compositions as far as the time signature and formal structure are concerned, visually they differ greatly due to a distinctive articulation style. A mere glance at a page of Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* instantly throws into relief the variety and richness of possibilities as expressed by plentiful articulation signs. Compared with the scores of Chopin's *Mazurkas* (examples 152, 153, 154), one recognizes the distinctive and prominent placing of articulation in Szymanowski's compositions. The majority of the sounds are designed to be produced in a very specific and fixed way:

E x a m p l e 157. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 5; mm. 1–4

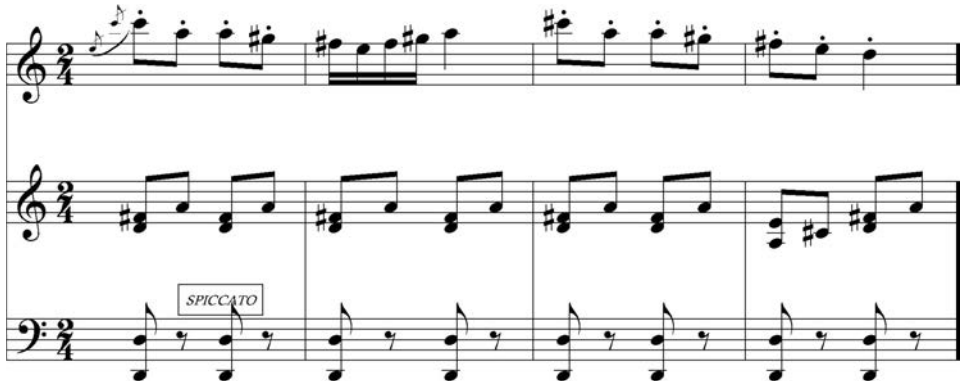


E x a m p l e 158. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 16; mm. 1–4

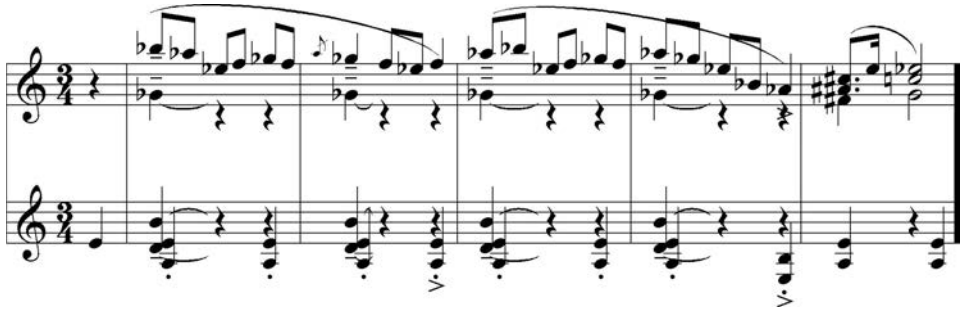


Szymanowski enriched piano articulation by incorporating the various techniques of string instruments. It leads one to wonder if the *Mazurkas* are really meant to be played on a piano at all, or rather by a Podhale string ensemble. It should be pointed out that traditional Podhale music does not involve such a great variety of articulation but is simply based on three or four static layers, each offering an independently articulated line. Szymanowski frequently combines the four parts of the string instruments into one, trying not to lose the intensity and variety of sounds and expression.

Example 159. Kotoński, *Zbójnicki* no. 13



Example 160. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 7; mm. 1–5



For Szymanowski, *Mazurkas* opp. 50 and 62 are not merely compositions for piano but rather a continuation of Chopin's piano *Mazurkas* with the vocal and instrumental music of the Podhale region thrown in, all combined into one eclectic modern composition.

Chapter 5

Interpreting and Performing Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*

On the surface, Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* appear to be simple compositions. As mentioned earlier, the characteristic textural complexity representative of the composer's middle period is not yet present, and together with the aspect of their moderate length, they might give the impression that they are not challenging to perform. Yet, problems arise in the early stages of their interpretation since the compositions offer a mixture of two very different types of folk music; one in two-four time, the other in three-four. Should they then be performed as *Mazurka* dances, or *Zbójnicki* dances? Should they portray the mellow character of Lowland music, or should they represent the driving force that is typical of Podhale music? Even Adolf Chybiński, in the first article ever written about the *Mazurkas*, recognized the pitfalls and difficulties involved in their interpretation:

> Szymanowski is of the opinion that it was Podhale which gave him the most concrete impulses to transform his style, or at least, some of its elements. Perhaps not so much the landscape as such, but rather the people living in Podhale, though, in my opinion, it was both. His having grown together with those people and their music is undeniable. However, this should not be the source of an incorrect or narrow interpretation of Szymanowski's music.[1]

We cannot, therefore, ignore the composer's indications nor his very detailed and specific articulation marks, which to me are drawn from the variety of

[1] Adolf Chybiński, "Mazurki Fortepianowe Karola Szymanowskiego" [The piano mazurkas of Karol Szymanowski] *Muzyka*, no.1 (1925): 13.

sounds found in the instrumental music of Podhale bands; a lack of knowledge or a poor understanding of Podhale music might produce questionable results. There is also the danger of interpreting Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* in the same manner that one would approach Chopin's music, a limiting perspective that detracts significantly from Szymanowski's music.

As an active performer, I have faced severe criticism from teachers and other artists regarding the "vulgar" and "harsh" sounds imbedded in my performances of Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*. I have also been chastised for my liberal approach to tempi and extensive use of *rubato*. In all fairness, these critiques possibly arose from the belief that the compositions should be approached as if they were identical to Chopin's works. Sadly, unfamiliarity with their true origins can potentially be rather damaging to Szymanowski's *Mazurkas*. First and foremost, Szymanowski's *Mazurkas* are inspired by Podhale folk music and the compositions reflect the harsh and driven sounds that are to be found at its roots. It should also be noted that, unlike lowland music, the Podhale tradition encompasses various dances in a great variety of tempi.

The most unique features of the *Mazurka* genre also pose the greatest challenge in their interpretation: the accompaniment patterns, complex rhythms, and articulation. An additional prerequisite is the ability to parse through the variety of dances present in a single *Mazurka*. A common structure is a *przyśpiewka* in *rubato* tempo opening the composition followed by a fast and driven *góralski* dance reminiscent of the folk *Mazurka*, with a *Zielony*-like dance at the close. One must know all of the Podhale dances to interpret Szymanowski, just as one should be acquainted with the characteristics of the *Kujawiak*, *Oberek*, and *Mazur* when approaching Chopin's *Mazurkas*.

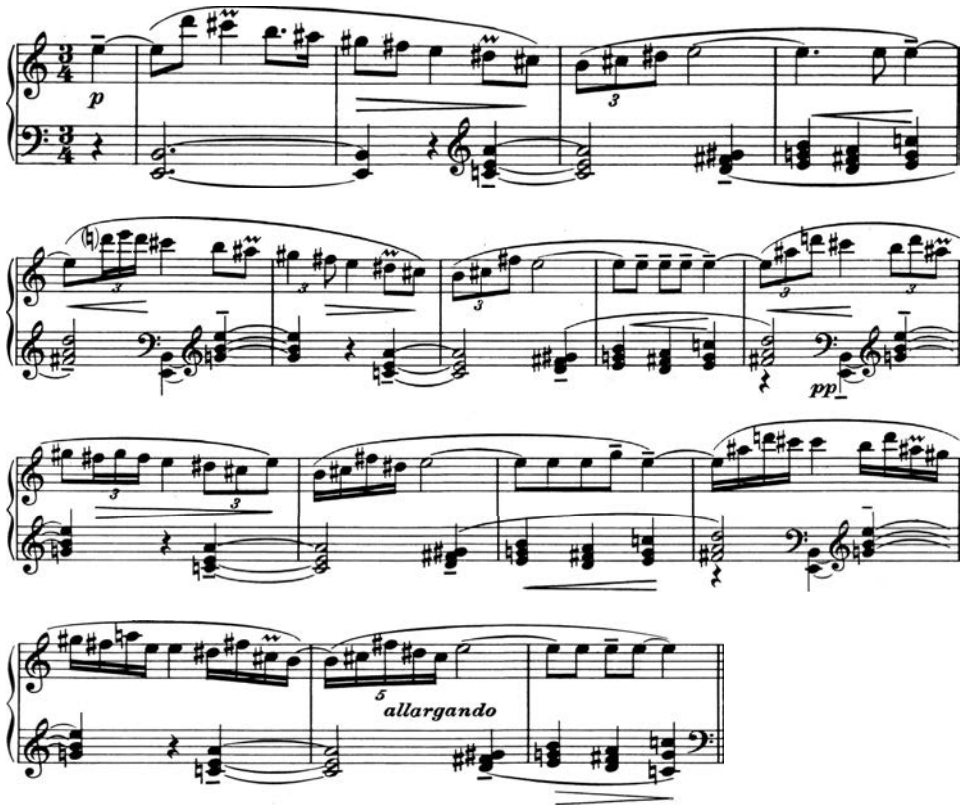
In my experience, the accompaniment patterns and articulation are the most challenging and unusual aspects of the compositions, not only because of the great variety and the richness of their elements, but also due to their very construction. In most cases, Szymanowski transcribed actual Podhale band music – consisting of only string instruments – for piano. This is why the *Mazurkas* complicate matters for the performer, who in many cases may need to have the experience of a singer, a choir member and a string band player in addition to being an accomplished pianist.

Twenty Mazurkas op. 50 – Zakopane, 1924–1925
Book I: *Mazurkas* Nos. 1–4

Dedicated to Artur Rubinstein

Mazurka no. 1 *Sostenuto, Molto Rubato*

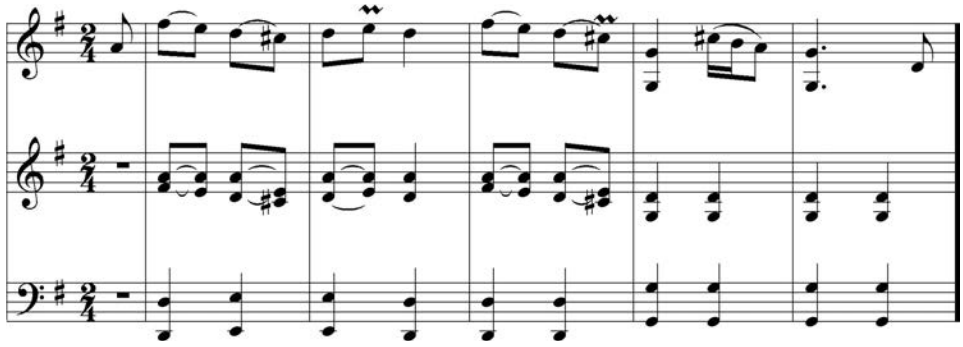
E x a m p l e 161. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 1, A Section; mm. 1–16



As mentioned previously, this *Mazurka* seems to be a dance in 2/4, not 3/4 time, posing some serious difficulties for the performer. Other problems arise due to ties and phrase structure, with the rhythmic stress shifted away from the downbeat. The improvisatory character of the melodic line, with constant alternations between triplets, sixteenth notes, and quintuplets requires a relentless control of the pulse, while maintaining the illusion of improvisation. Keeping track of all these elements requires some multi-tasking. Szymanowski marks the composition *Sostenuto, Molto rubato*, which becomes an additional challenge

when one considers the need for a continuous rhythmic pulse. The melody is known as the *Sabała* melody, and it can be found in various collections, as in Mierczyński's no. 6.

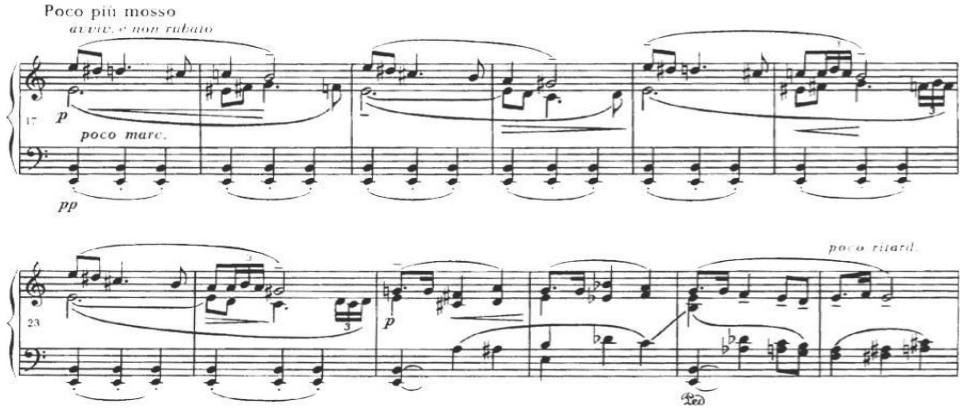
E x a m p l e 162. Mierczyński, *Sabała* no. 6



B Section (mm. 17–36) *Poco più mosso*; *avviv. e non rubato.*

This is a *góral* dance accompanied by a bass section in the left hand, which lends propultions and functions as rhythmic support for the right hand. The multi-voiced texture imposes further demands on the performer.

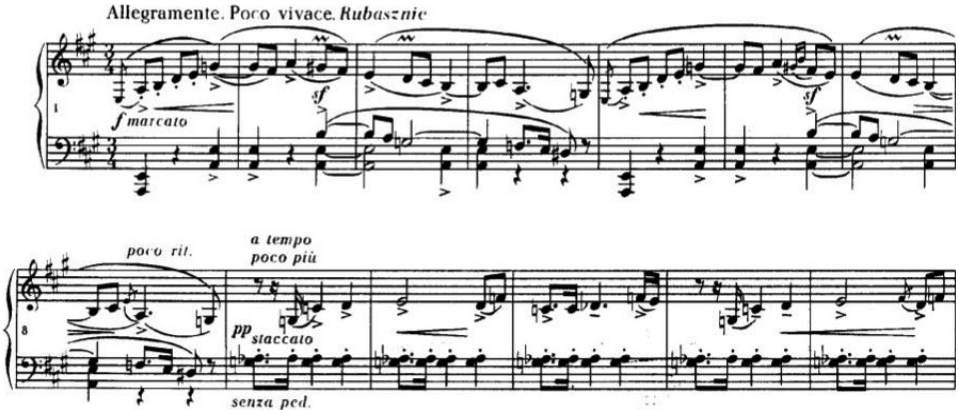
E x a m p l e 163. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 51 no. 1; mm. 17–28



Mazurka no. 2 *Allegramente. Poco vivace. Rubasznie* ('Boisterously')
A Section (mm. 1–28)

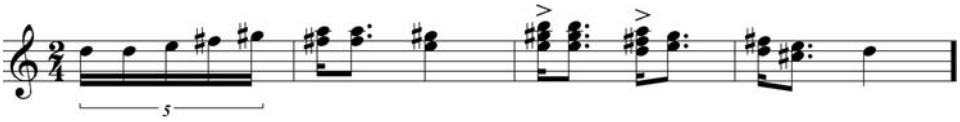
Measures: 1–13. The clear relationship to the *Krzesany* dance is unquestionable. As of measure 9, the major challenge is to render the full variety of the notated accents and slurs, while simultaneously harnessing them into a coherent structure.

E x a m p l e 164. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 2; mm. 1–13

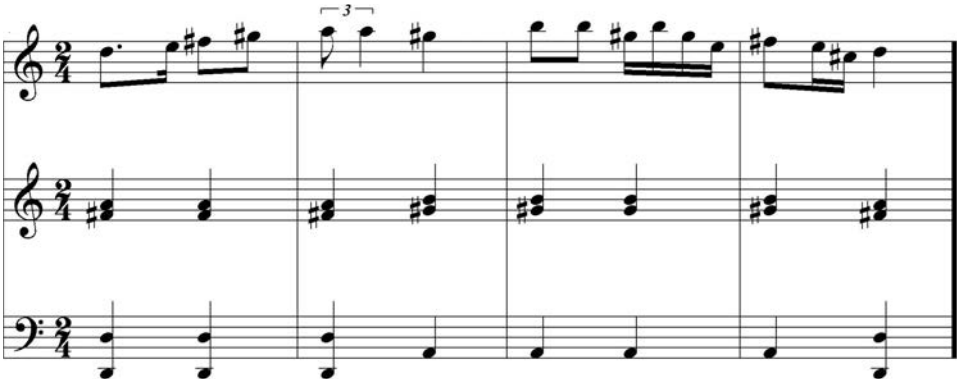


Krzesany Kotoński no. 14

E x a m p l e 165A. Kotoński, *Przyśpiewka do krzesanego* no. 14; mm. 1–4



E x a m p l e 165B. Kotoński, *Krzesany* no. 14; mm. 1–4.

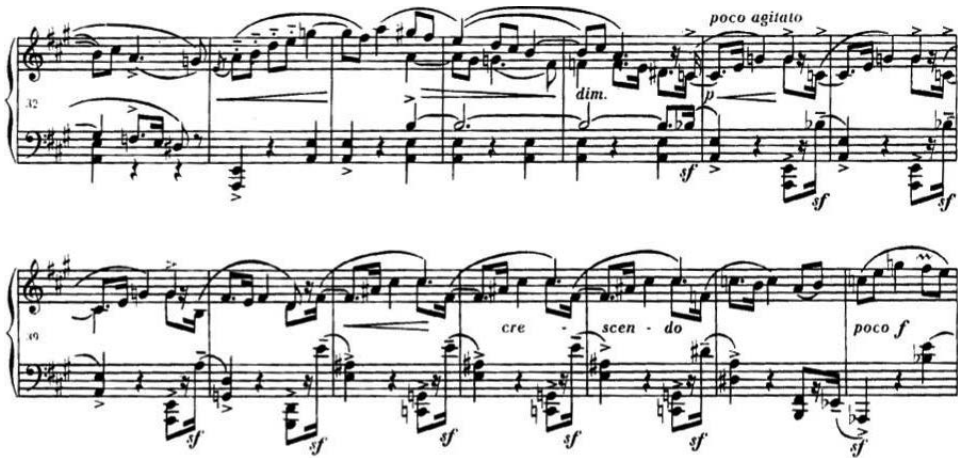


Once again, this is an example of a Podhale dance in 2/4 restructured by Szymanowski into 3/4 time. The *Mazurka* does not make sense, in my opinion, when it is played in 3/4 time. Yet, the composer has masked the time signature using unique slurring and articulation marks in order to change the musical setting from 2/4 to 3/4. The richness of the articulation adds another layer of complexity. There are six accent marks and one *sf* sign, all within a mere four measures. The performer is faced with the task of choosing between "fewer" or "more" accented sounds to avoid monotony and lack of direction within the phrase. The rhythmic peak and strongest sound, I feel, should be placed on the second and third beats of the second measure. The great variety of articulation within a short duration – staccato, legato, and slurring – presents further difficulty in performance.

B Section (mm. 28–53)

Measures 37–44 reveal the composer's interest in synthesizing the gruff nature of Podhale music. Once again, this is an artistic representation of a Podhale dance, which requires a steady pulse and harsh sounds, created by accenting the weakest part of the measure: the last sixteenth note.

Example 166. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 2; mm. 32–45

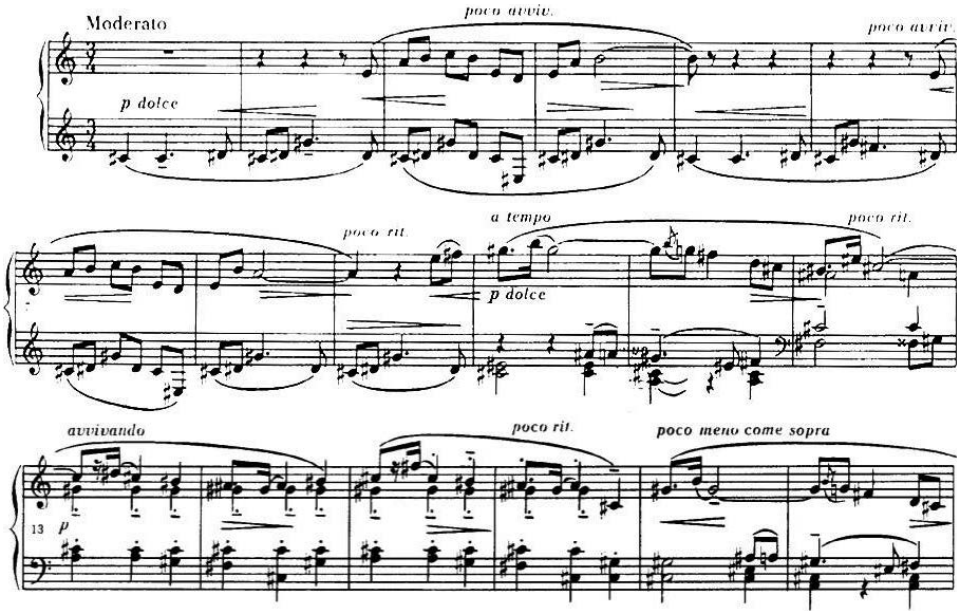


A′ section (mm. 53–81) *Poco meno, tranquillo*.

The first eight measures are reminiscent of a *przyśpiewka* to a fast and strident dance, marked here by Szymanowski *Subito Tempo I*; *Vivace* (m. 61). The *tranquillo* section requires delicacy and pronounced use of *tempo rubato*. Szymanowski himself marks it *dolce* for the first four-measure phrase, and *dolcissimo* for the second one. The last eight measures of the *Mazurka* are based on imitation, with overlapping phrases that lead to the gradual disappearance of the main motif. The process requires a high level of control and musicianship.

Mazurka no. 3 *Moderato*
A (mm. 1–29)

E x a m p l e 167. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 3; mm. 1–18



The opening is reminiscent of Chopin's *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 3, and can be considered an homage to Chopin. Just as challenging as the opening of the C-sharp Minor *Mazurka* by Chopin, Szymanowski's composition is based on imitation in an inverted voice setting with the left hand introducing the melody. The unusually high register of the low voice recalls the Podhale singing technique in which the men sing in falsetto. Measures 9–29 are replete with various articulation signs within a multi-layered texture. The regular emphasis

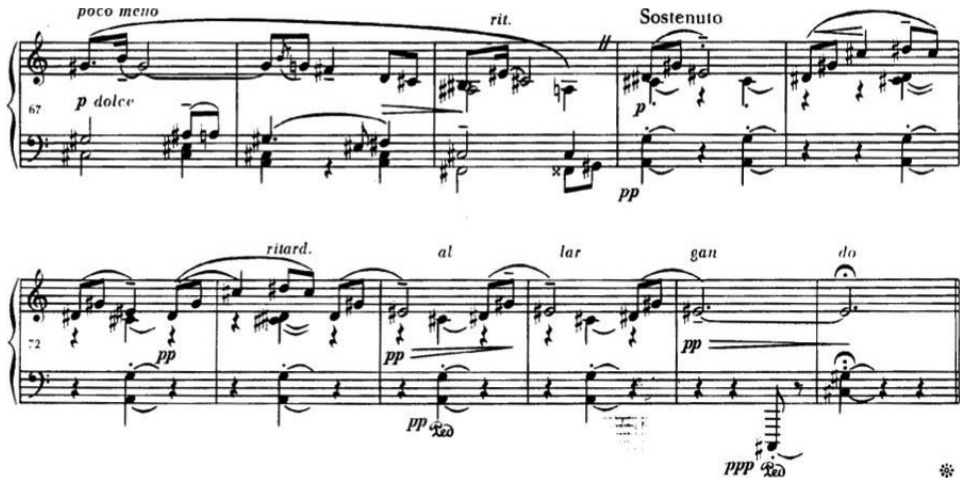
on the second beat in nearly every measure creates rhythmic stability, which by definition is foreign to the mazurka genre. The Classical 4 + 4 measure phrase with a harmonic progression based on the question-answer structure is marred by a one-measure extension (m. 9). It is then followed by a three-measure phrase leading to a four-measure (2 + 2) dance-like section, after which the reprise of all the sections is unpredictably recapitulated. The constant conflict between a symmetrical and asymmetrical phrase interrupted by repetitive motifs creates a chain-like structure and is yet another challenge to render seamlessly.

B Section (mm. 30–52)

This section is built exclusively on a three-measure phrase structure. It is a Podhale dance articulated by arpeggiated chords in the left hand, with accents and staccato articulation marked in the *piano*, *pianissimo*, and even *pianissimo possibile* dynamic range.

The Coda (mm. 70–77) is marked *Sostenuto, Ritardando Allargando* and emulates a song to be performed in mountainous surroundings, where parts of it are heard as an echo that slowly fades away. This 77-measure composition requires at least twenty-nine alterations of the tempo.

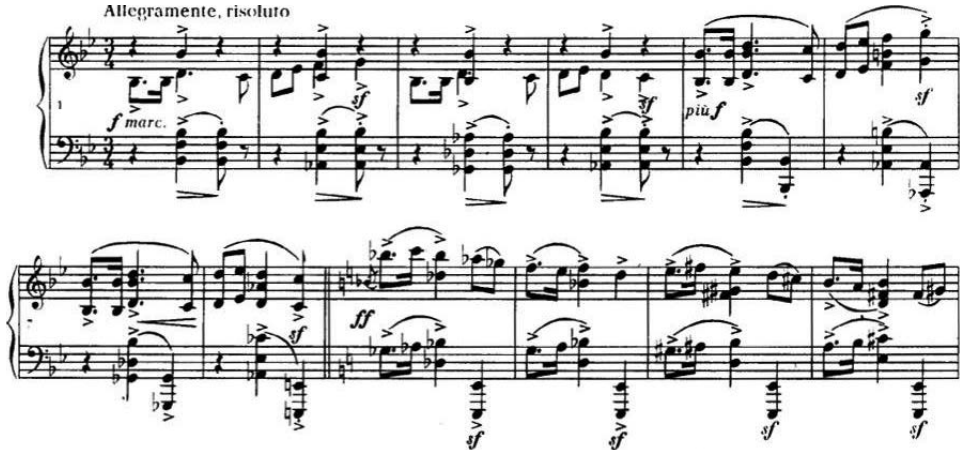
E x a m p l e 168. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 3; mm. 67–77



Mazurka no. 4 *Allegramente, risoluto*
A Section (mm. 1–34).

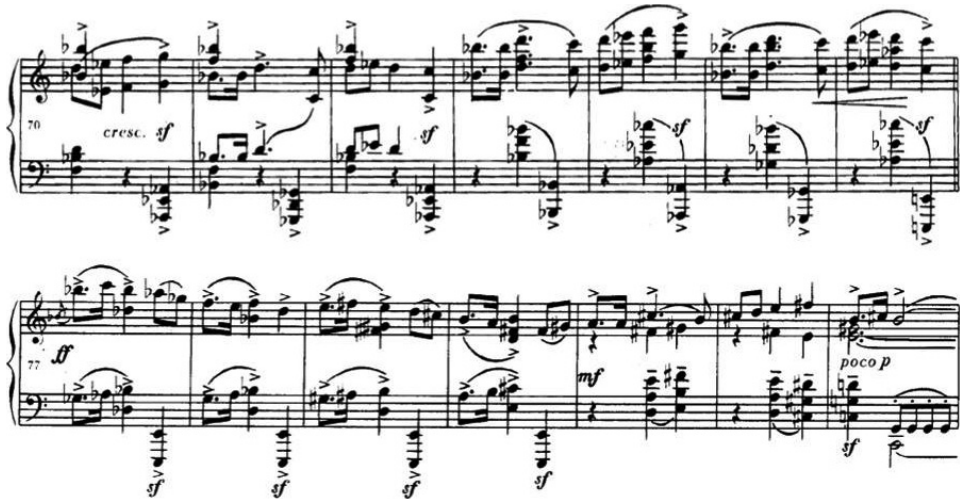
This is one of the two *Mazurkas* based on a 1 : 1 : 1 proportion, with all three sections (ABA´) of equal length (34 measures each), and with an identical micro-organization of the A and A´ sections. It is one of Szymanowski's most straightforward and traditional *Mazurkas*. In the opening, however, Szymanowski treats the hands independently, requiring contrasting dynamics and articulation marks. It is very easy to misinterpret or misread details in this mazurka: for one, Szymanowski does not specify whether the *sf* mark applies to the right hand only, since the left hand eighth note is the second from the slur marked *diminuendo*.

E x a m p l e 169. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 4; mm. 1–12



Szymanowski chooses to introduce the melody of the opening in the lower voice of the right hand part. This innovation, combined with a chordal texture and distinct articulation attached to each independent voice, transforms the would-be simple opening into a rather challenging section. The leaping descending accompaniment pattern in mm. 9–12 also contributes to the technical difficulty of the piece. It is later (mm. 72–80) developed and expanded into massive chords that appear with the return of the main subject in "grandioso" style. The pizzicato in the multi-voice setting that is introduced in m. 15 is not easy to execute either, due to its low register and *piano* dynamic.

E x a m p l e 170. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 4; mm. 70–83



The B section (mm. 35–78) is once again a combination of a *Kujawiak* dance and a *przyśpiewka* in *rubato* tempo. Szymanowski marks it *poco meno,* and *dolce espressivo tranquillo.* The pizzicato accompaniment pattern reappears several times like an *idée fixe.* Oddly, it consists of four staccato notes at one pitch, which lies in the middle part of this section's chord. The motif strikes one as incongruous considering the *dolce* character of this section, and is technically problematic to execute.

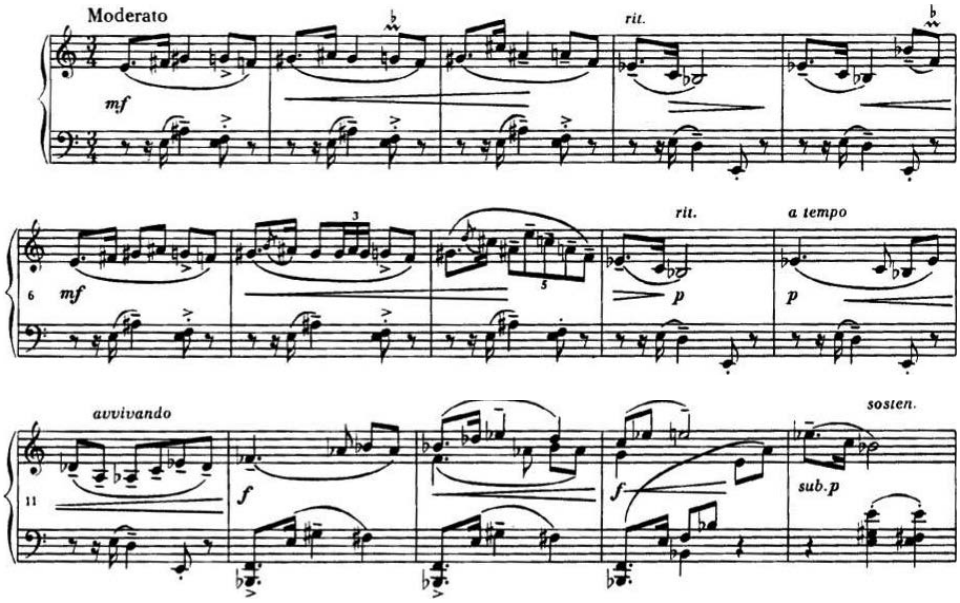
Book II: *Mazurkas* Nos. 5–8

Mazurkas nos. 5 and 6 are dedicated to Szymanowski's brother, Feliks Szymanowski, who was a fine pianist and a composer. *Mazurkas* nos. 7 and 8 are dedicated to pianist Zbigniew Drzewiecki, who was a pupil of Ignacy Paderewski and a professor at the Warsaw Conservatory.

Mazurka no. 5 *Moderato*
A section (mm. 1–23)

The challenge of the first eleven bars lies in the ostinato accompaniment pattern in the left hand consisting of two slurred sixteenth notes with an accented quarter, combined with a dissonant spare "pizzicato" interval of a second.

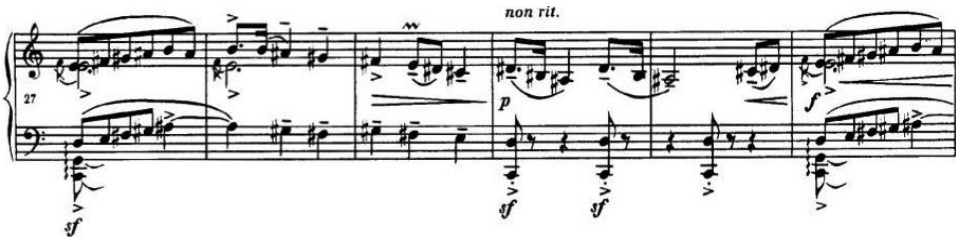
Example 171. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 5; mm. 1–15



I believe the pedal should not be used here given the staccato articulation and slur indicated by Szymanowski in the left hand. The five bar opening phrase, with a *ritardando* mark in the fourth measure is somewhat confusing, requiring careful manipulation of the tempo and dynamics. It is not clear whether Szymanowski considered the fifth measure as the bridge to the second phrase, or as the conclusion to the first phrase. Musically, it makes the most sense to treat the last beat of the fifth measure as a pick-up to the second phrase, and measure four and the first two beats of five as a conclusion to the opening statement.

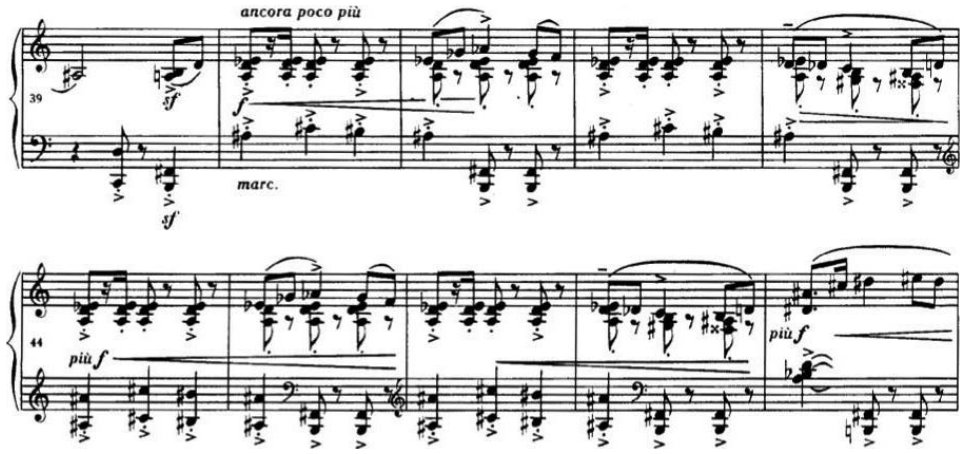
The majority of the B section (mm. 24–63) is, once again, built upon an asymmetrical phrase structure, mostly three-measure phrases alternated with two-measure "interruptions" (mm. 27–31).

Example 172. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 5; mm. 27–32



It is also curious that the first six measures of the B section are written in unison. Measures 40–48 are an example of a Podhale dance based on a repetetive two-measure motif. It features accented staccato sounds and an abrupt change of register in the left hand. Beginning in m. 57, the multi-layer setting, with descending chromatic thirds, and the melodic line in the top voice with an accompaniment pattern employing a leap, makes this passage demanding for the performer. Szymanowski marks the section *pp dolce*, which, due to the registral extremes and the multi-voice setting, is not easy to realize.

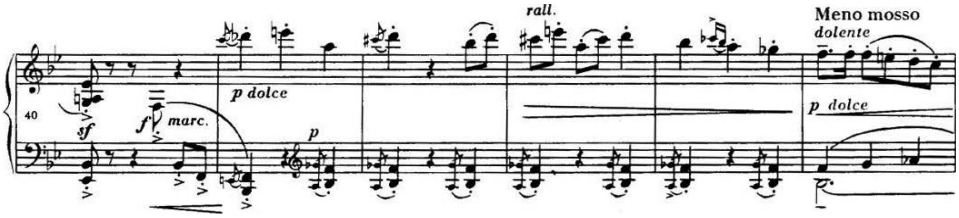
E x a m p l e 173. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 5; mm. 39–48



Mazurka no. 6 *Vivace (Junacko)*

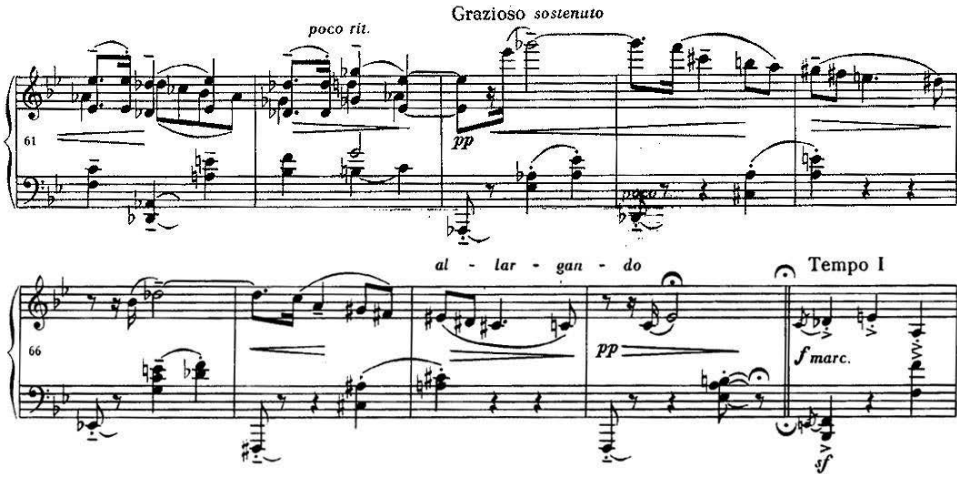
This *Mazurka* is marked *Vivace, Junacko* ('with a swagger'). This is one of the most vital and fastest of the *Mazurkas*. The major challenge of this composition lies in the precise execution of the staccato markings, which are sometimes connected to slurs and ornamented by double notes (mm. 41–44) and accents. The form of this *Mazurka* is also one of the most irregular ones. Its A section is almost twice the size of the corresponding A′ section, where the same material is repeated twice.

E x a m p l e 174. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 6; mm. 40–45



The B section (mm. 45–70), on the other hand, shocks the performer with its short contrasting *Grazioso* section (seven-measures long), which transports the driven dance into a melancholic "dream-like" world.

E x a m p l e 175. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 6; mm. 61–70

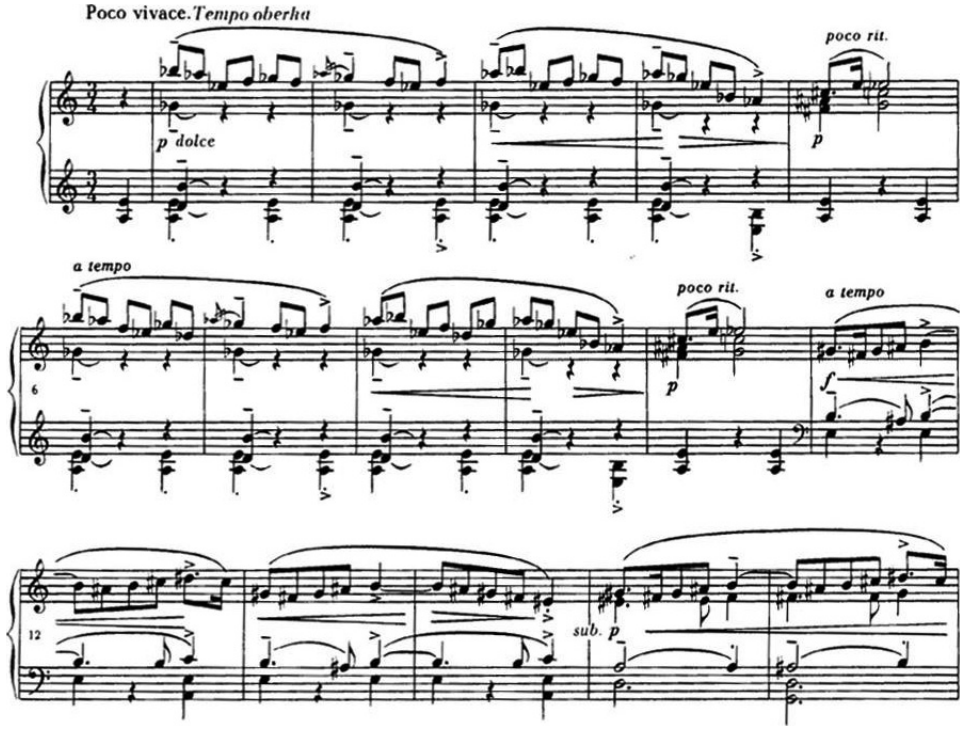


Mazurka no. 7 *Poco vivace (Tempo Oberka)*

The opening of *Mazurka* no. 7 is one of the most demanding compositions of op. 50, due to a complex multi-layered setting and diverse articulation. The fact that the voices are so widely spread out, exceeding the span of an average hand, adds to the arduous task of performing it accurately. The slurring and articulation of the middle voice in mm. 11–14 are not easy to bring out either. The last measure of the opening five-measure phrase is yet another problematic place. Szymanowski asks for *poco ritardando* in that measure, and marks only the next phrase *a tempo*. But the opening fifth, appearing as an upbeat at the

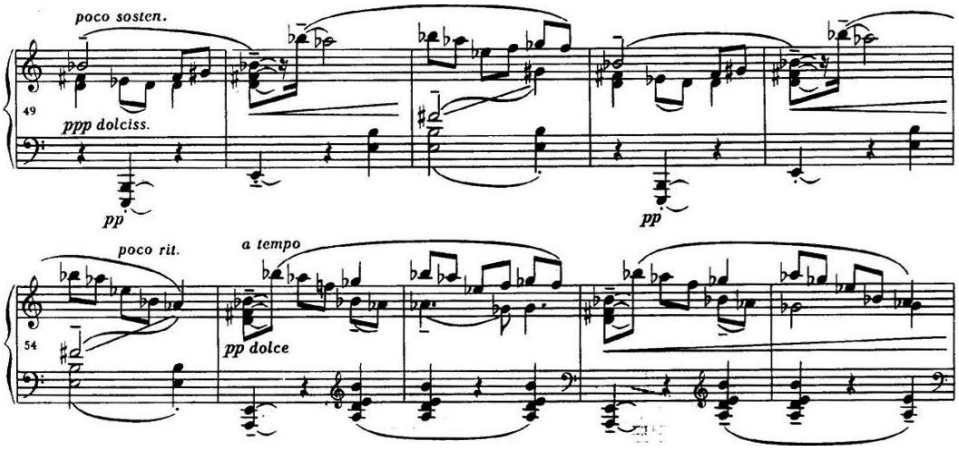
beginning of the piece, is also present in m. 5. The dilemma here is whether or not the fifth in m. 5 is intended to be treated as part of the old phrase or as the upbeat to the following phrase. The fifth belongs to the first phrase if one adheres to the notated marks, yet it does not seem logical.

Example 176. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 7; mm. 1–16



Measures 41–48 are based on an irregular pizzicato repeated-note pattern, in *pp* and *ppp* dynamics, with two voices collaborating in the right hand. Once again, it is the range and diversity rather than the complexity of each individual line that makes the *Mazurka* difficult. The same can be said about the subsequent section (mm. 49–58), where various layers with extremely meticulous and varied articulation are combined to create the impression of a carefree improvisation.

E x a m p l e 177. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 7; mm. 61–70

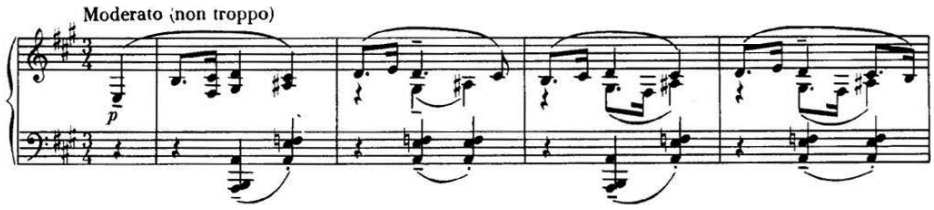


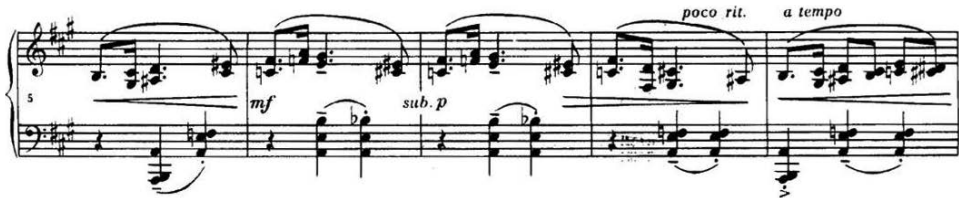
It is also significant that there is a lack of symmetrical proportions between the sections. If the first five measures are considered to be a "call," or *przyśpiewka*, then the A and A′ sections would be built upon an A = 5–17–4; A′ = 4–17–4 design and B would show symmetry as follows: B = 8 + 8 + 3 + 3. Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the high register of the opening phrase can be attributed to the influence of Podhale singing.

Mazurka no. 8 *Moderato (non troppo)*

This is the *Mazurka* held in least regard and the most criticized one in the collection. It is also one of the most difficult pieces of the set to perform, due to its unspecified and somewhat monotonous character. Even the tempo marking seems somewhat confusing: *Moderato (non troppo)*. The opening is built upon a one-measure chain-like phrase structure. The first eight-measure portion seems to be missing a culmination point.

E x a m p l e 178. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 8; mm. 1–9





The B section (mm. 32–73) clearly begins as a harsh and driven Podhale dance, but is quickly transformed into a complex multi-layered "orchestral" section that is technically thorny. It is full of leaps, uncomfortably spaced chords, and *forte* dynamics. This is especially true in measures 51–71. Compared to the other mazurkas of this collection, I believe this is one of Szymanowski's least successful compositions, despite the perfect symmetry both between the sections (A = 32; B = 40; A′ = 32) and within the micro-organization of the A and A′ sections (12 + 4 + 4 + 12).

Book III: *Mazurkas* Nos. 9–11

Dedicated to Jan Smeterlin, a fellow pianist
and a close friend of Szymanowski's.
Book III contains the most original *Mazurkas* of the entire op. 50

Mazurka no. 9 *Tempo moderato*

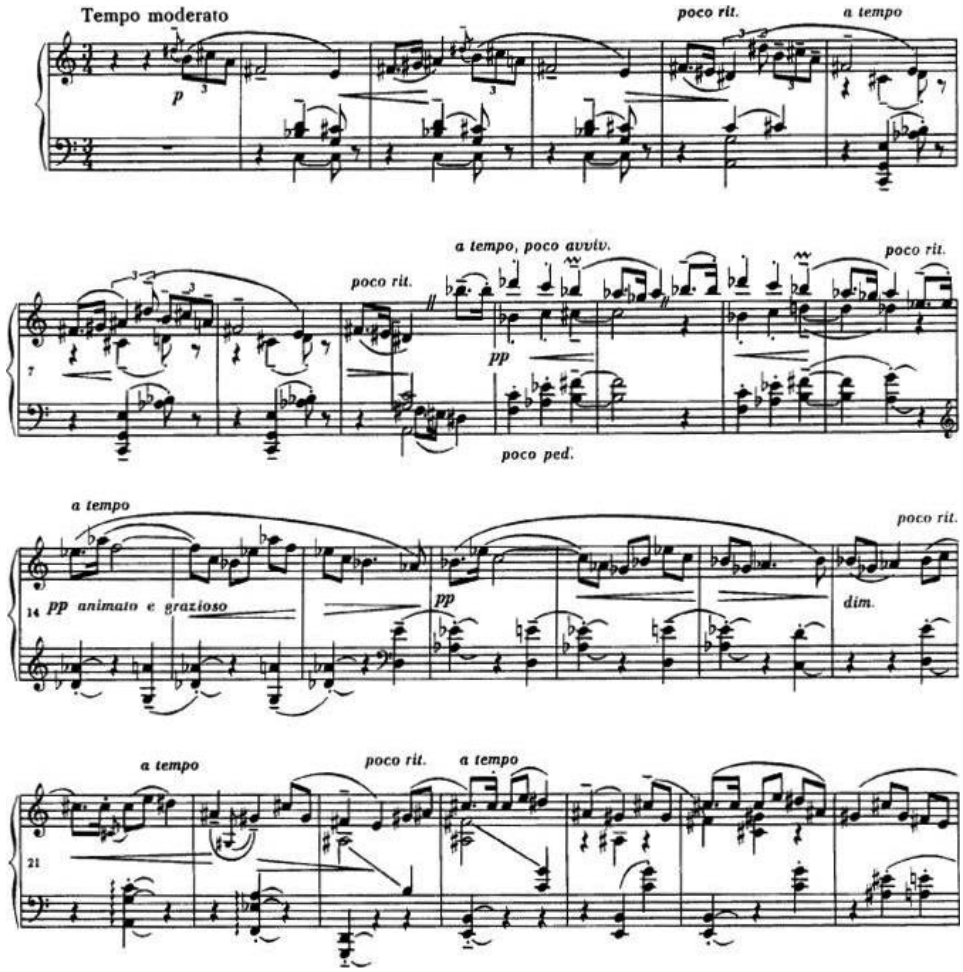
The major challenge of this *Mazurka* is executing the changes in tempo with richness and character throughout the entire composition. Almost every phrase introduces new and very distinct musical material (mm. 1–9; mm. 10–14, mm. 14–19; mm. 20–24). The wide spacing of the diverse and frequently slurred chords contributes to its difficulty as well.

However, Szymanowski also turns toward a simple unison statement, and builds an entire 23-measure section upon that texture (mm. 36–58). The extensive use of short values in a pizzicato accompaniment pattern along with a great variety of articulation marks makes this composition especially taxing.

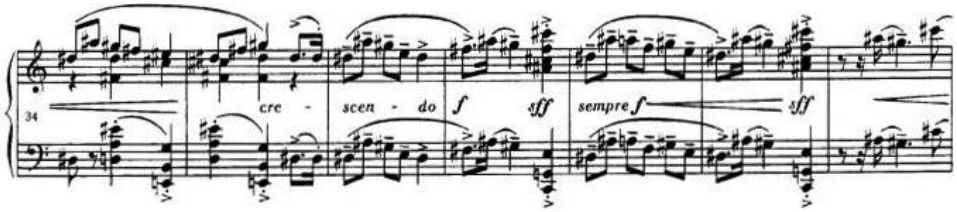
Refreshingly, *Mazurka* no. 9 begins with an upbeat. This feature is very uncommon in, if not entirely absent from, Lowland folk music. Szymanowski makes pronounced use of triplets and ornamentation. Once again, the characteristic emphasis on a weak part of the measure found in Podhale music is highly evident in this composition: the ornamented eighth note preceding the opening

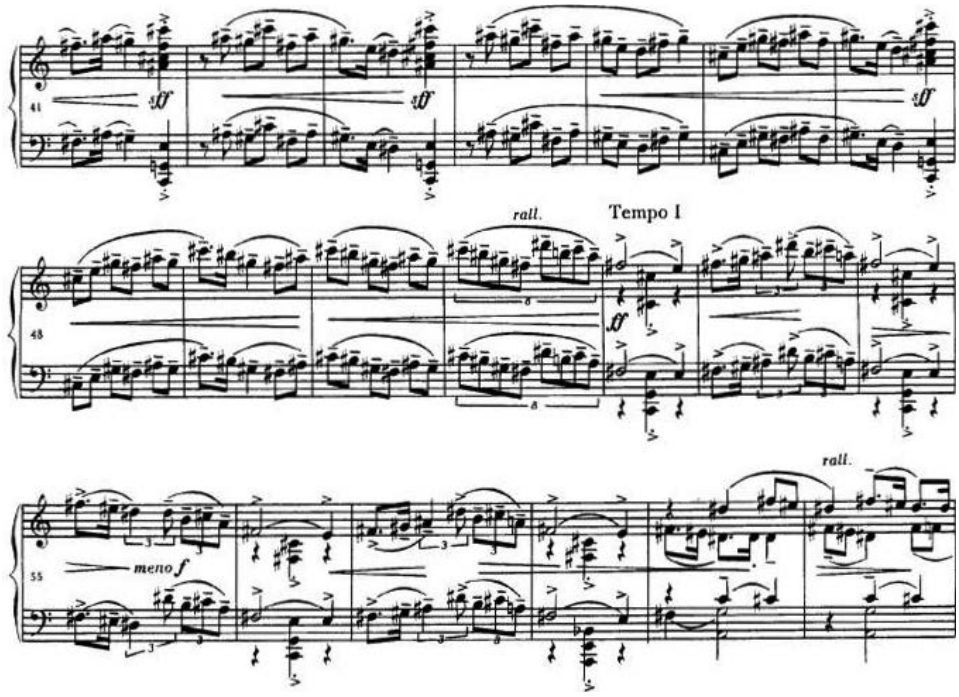
triplet is accented. The symmetry between the parts (A = 27, 5; B = 58; C = 27, 5) is not reflected in the micro-organization within the parts.

E x a m p l e 179. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 9; mm. 1–27



E x a m p l e 180. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 9; mm. 34–60

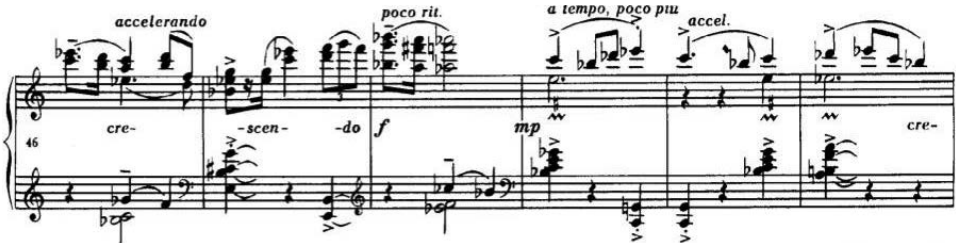


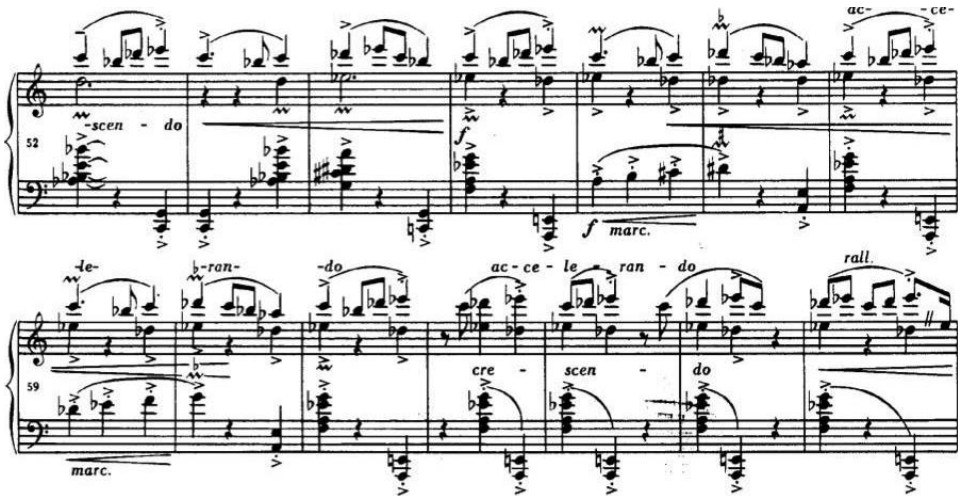


Mazurka no. 10 *Allegramente. Vivace. Con brio*

The substantial use of leaps in the accompaniment pattern, the use of the entire keyboard, and elaborate chordal technique all come together to contribute to the bravura nature of this *Mazurka*. This is especially evident at the end of the B section starting at m. 49 (mm. 49–65). The extensive ornamentation in the middle line of a highly spread out voice setting adds further obstacles to a perfect performance. Measures 61–65 are full of syncopations and unexpected irregular rhythmic patterns that are created by recurring rests.

E x a m p l e 181. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 10; mm. 46–65





The interval of a third, often used in a chromatic setting, is frequently featured in *Mazurkas* nos. 10, 11, and 12. The motif in and of itself is not challenging but becomes onerous for the performer when introduced as one of the three or four voices, often under a slur. In addition to the third motif, the triplet emerges as the preferred rhythmic formula in this book. For example, no. 9 opens with a triplet, while no. 10 mm. 15–18 and no. 12 mm. 66–78 make extensive use of the triplet in their accompaniment patterns and melodies. Szymanowski even resorts to a septuplet group in no. 10, m. 20.

The formal structure of the *Mazurka* shows symmetry between the somewhat disproportional sections: A= 48; B = 17; A′ = 48; and Coda = 3.

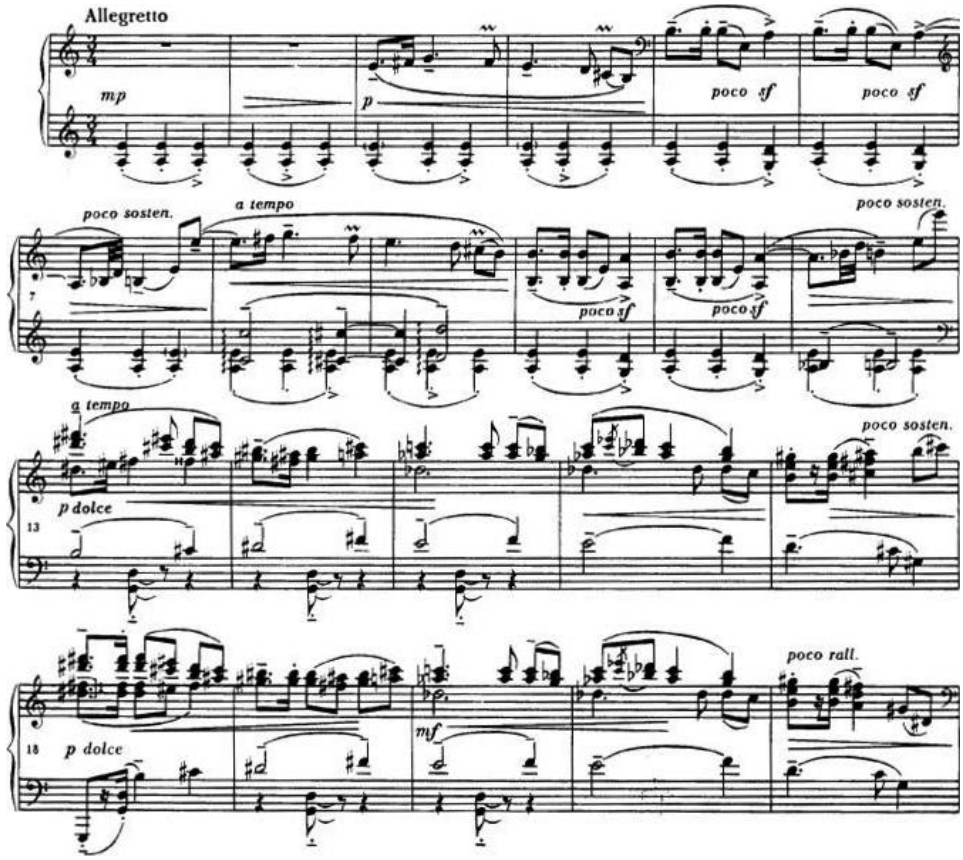
Mazurka no. 11 *Allegretto*

As was mentioned in Chapter 4A, the opening of this *Mazurka* has a dual time signature and to some degree serves as an example of a polymetric structure. The left hand in mm. 1–12 is organized into a 2/4 time signature, which is articulated by accents, while the right hand portrays a *Mazurka* dance in triple meter. In the first twelve measures of the composition the bass part is written in an unusually high register. As was the case with *Mazurkas* nos. 3 and 7, this is likely the influence of Podhale singing in which the men sing falsetto in a "high voice" manner.

In addition to a difficult third motif, sometimes doubled inside a part for the right hand (m. 18), Szymanowski experiments with a multi-layered texture.

This becomes a major challenge for the performer to execute. This is the only *Mazurka* in Szymanowski's collection that is in rounded binary form A (a 22) B (b 22 + a´11) with a perfect structure of A = 12 + 10; B = 12 + 10 + 11. The micro-organization of the phrase structure, however, is surprising with its internal design of A (7 + 5; 5 + 5); B (3 + 3 + 3 + 3; 3 + 4 + 3; 5 + 6), which clearly obscures the inner proportions. This is surely the influence of Podhale music and its irregular phrase structure.

E x a m p l e 182. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 11; mm. 1–22



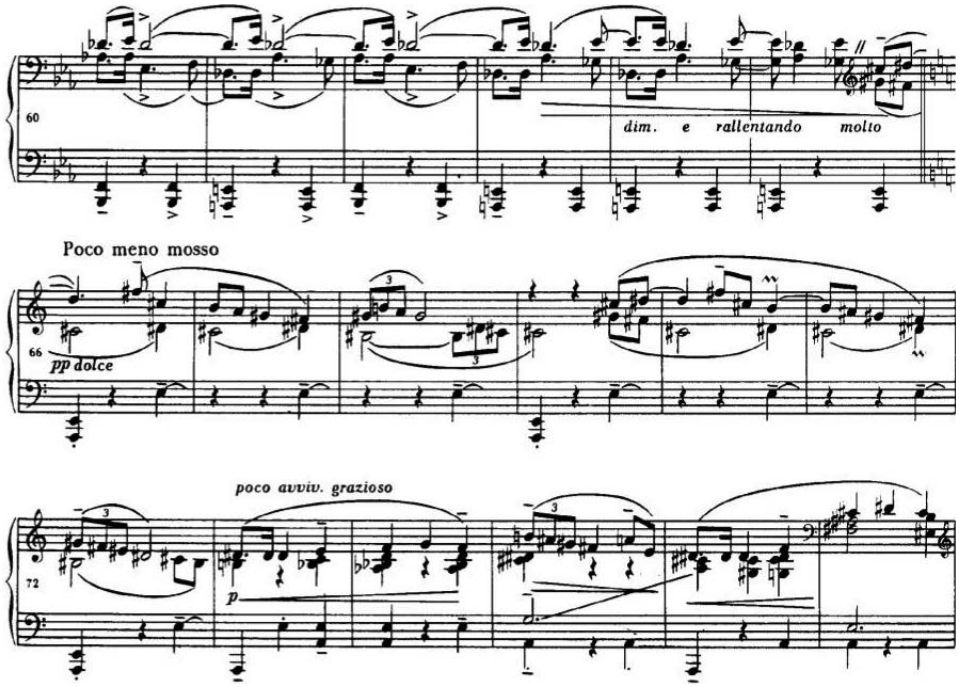
Mazurka no. 12 *Allegro moderato*

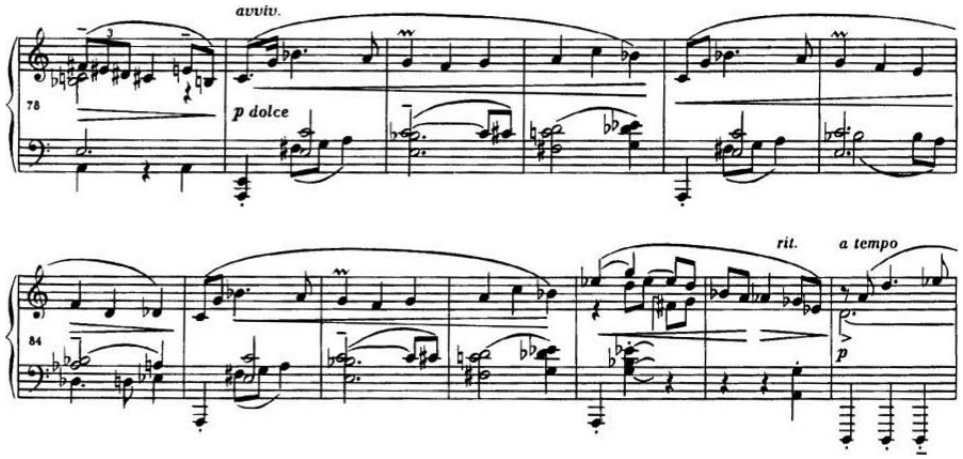
Irregular phrases pervade the structure of this *Mazurka* as well. However, the symmetry that exists between the sections: A (40) B (50) A´ (40) + Coda (12) does not suggest such a tendency. The micro-structure of the A and B sections

is based on the combination of a chain of three-measure phrases with two-measure phrases, respectively. It is also significant that the return of the A section does not follow the original phrase design which was built on the three-measure phrase structure. Instead, it is almost entirely based on even-numbered phrase structures (e.g. 8 + 8 + 4 + 4 + etc.). Also, the necessity of sustaining a multi-layered texture in this composition, combined with the diversity of the articulation and tempi, requires more feats from the performer. It is remarkable that Szymanowski uses a four-part texture within the mazurka genre (mm. 20–23).

In the beginning of the B section (mm. 65–89), the right hand is tested by two independent voices, which are widely spaced, but expected to be played *legato*. They are joined by a vastly contrasting, spare pizzicato accompaniment pattern in the left hand. Once again, the widely varied rhythmic structure, with its complex textural setting and advanced articulation, makes this composition subtly virtuosic.

E x a m p l e 183. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 12; mm. 60–90





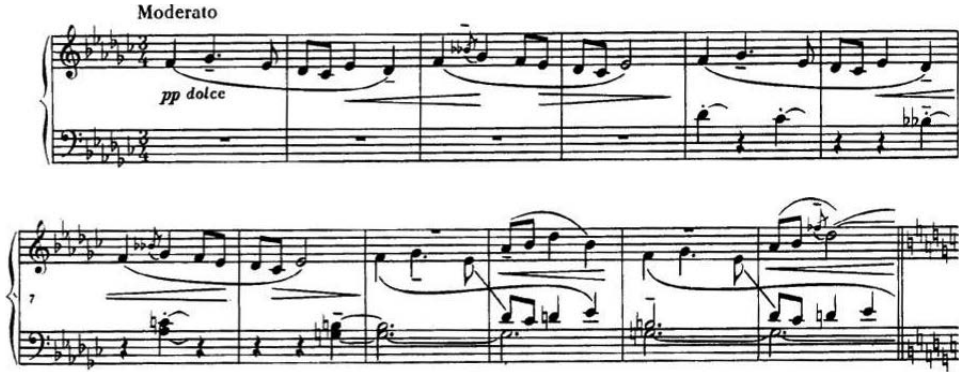
Book IV: *Mazurkas* Nos. 13–16

Dedicated to Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz and his wife, Hania.
Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz was the composer's distant cousin, close friend, and the poet and author of the book *Spotkania z Szymanowskim* (My Meetings with Szymanowski)

Mazurka no. 13 *Moderato*

This is one of the softest and gentlest *Mazurkas* in the set. While it does not pose a great technical challenge, it does require a high level of musicianship. A solo voice that introduces a rather melancholic melody (mm. 1–4) produces a highly unusual opening.

E x a m p l e 184. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 13; mm. 1–12



The theme is then repeated with a very delicate, spare pizzicato accompaniment. Note that the melody reappears without any accompanying voice in m. 27, and again at the conclusion of the composition. The beginning of this mazurka underscores the nature of Podhale songs, which are almost always introduced by a solo voice. It also seems to allude to a rustic shepherd's tune, which would be sung in the open air of a mountain meadow. Despite its deceptive simplicity, the opening to this mazurka requires advanced *rubato* technique, refined artistic imagination, and a well-developed skill for dynamic shading.

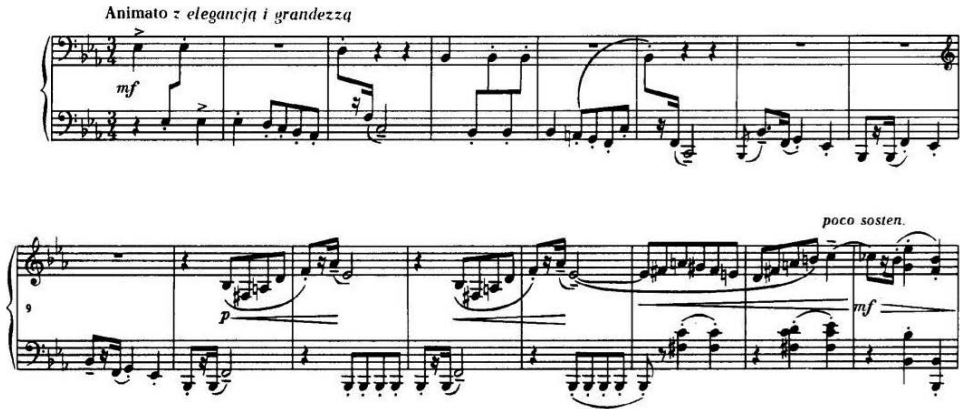
This perfectly designed A B A′ (30 + 40 + 30) composition reveals Szymanowski's interest in Classical phrase structure with its even-numbered phrases and an A section in rounded binary form (12 + 18). The micro-organization of the A and A′ sections show harmonic balance in the formal design (12 + 18). The short-valued pizzicato accompaniment pattern, along with the accompaniment pattern comprised of an ornamented figure, may demand some level of skill from the performer. The Podhale dance is introduced in m. 35 and lasts for thirty measures, acknowledging once again the sharp articulation and drive characteristic of the style.

Mazurka no. 14 *Animato (z elegancją i grandezzą)*

This composition seems to be related to both the waltz and the mazurka genres while retaining the harshness of the short accented chords inherent to Podhale music. The strong driving nature of the piece indicates Góral influences as well. This is also reflected in Szymanowski's markings: *Animato, Z elegancją i grandezzą* (Animated, with elegance and grandiosity). The mixed influences are also evident in the phrase structure, which displays a well-balanced construction of even and odd phrase lengths. The extensive use of leaping accompaniment patterns, abundant articulation markings, and fast tempo make this *Mazurka* one of the most difficult ones to perform.

However, the most demanding aspect of this composition is its combining of two unrelated dances: waltz and mazurka. The dance begins in a low register, which is fairly unusual in Szymanowski. The formal design is somewhat unexpected as well. The return of the A section in m. 69 is not based on the opening material from mm. 1–9, but rather on that of the following section (mm. 10–13). Therefore, the micro-organization of the A and A′ sections is dramatically altered, and does not reflect the nearly even symmetry evident in the design of the other sections (A = 30; B = 38; A′ = 29).

Example 185. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 14; mm. 1–16

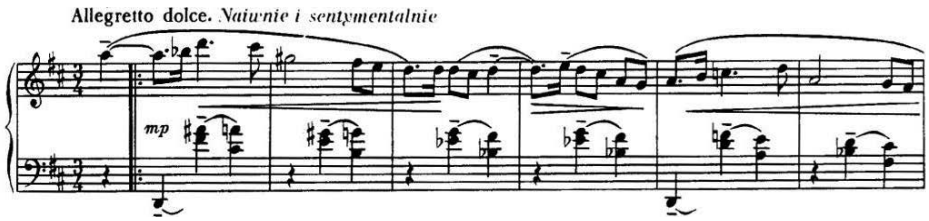


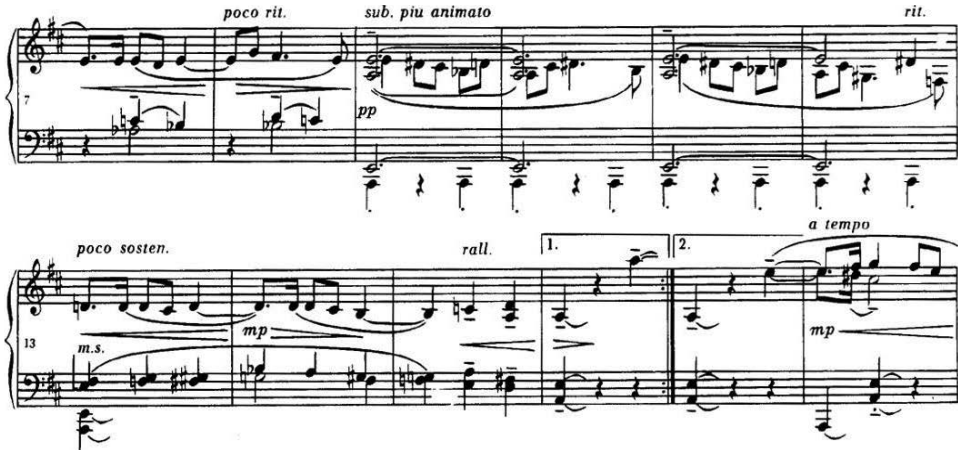
Mazurka no. 15 *Allegretto dolce (Naiwnie i sentymentalnie)*

This is, to me, one of the most beautiful mazurkas. Szymanowski's markings bring to light the character of the piece: *Allegretto dolce; Naiwnie i sentymentalnie* (Naïvely and sentimentally). This dance is also organized into a symmetrical design (A = 16; B = 42; A′ = 16), which is reflected in the micro-organization of the outer sections.

The challenge of this *Mazurka* lies in working around the conspicuously absent downbeat in the melodic line, requiring a high level of musicianship from the performer. The slurred accompaniment pattern, based on double notes that emerge as a syncopation on the weakest beat of the measure, is not easy to articulate without interrupting the delicate melodic line in the high voice. However, the greatest challenge lies in mm. 33–37, where the middle voice shifts from the right hand to the left, while accompanied by three additional layers that are widely spread across a three-octave range.

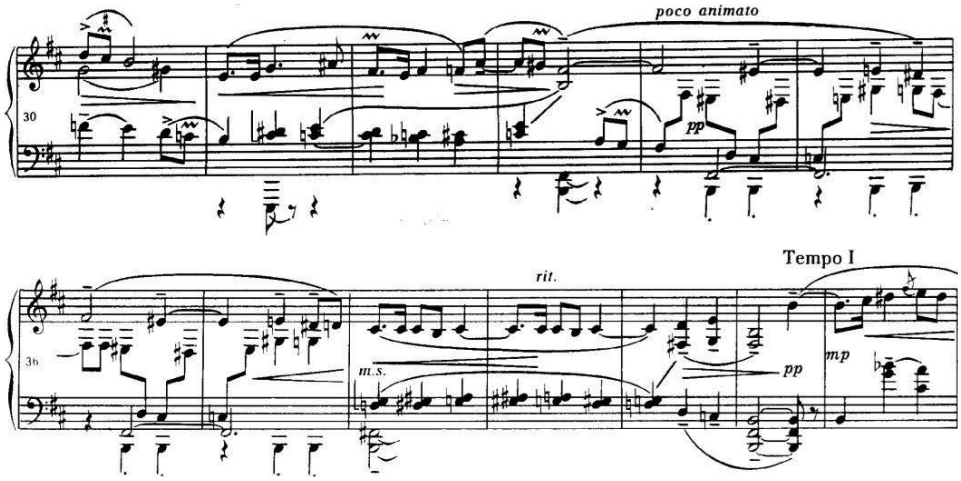
Example 186. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 15; mm. 1–18





The character of this *Mazurka* corresponds most closely to the *Kujawiak* dance. Szymanowski does not use any new articulation marks or rhythmic patterns in this composition, opting instead for familiar elements within a new design. All of these features help to make this *Mazurka* one of the most original pieces of the set.

E x a m p l e 187. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 15; mm. 30–42

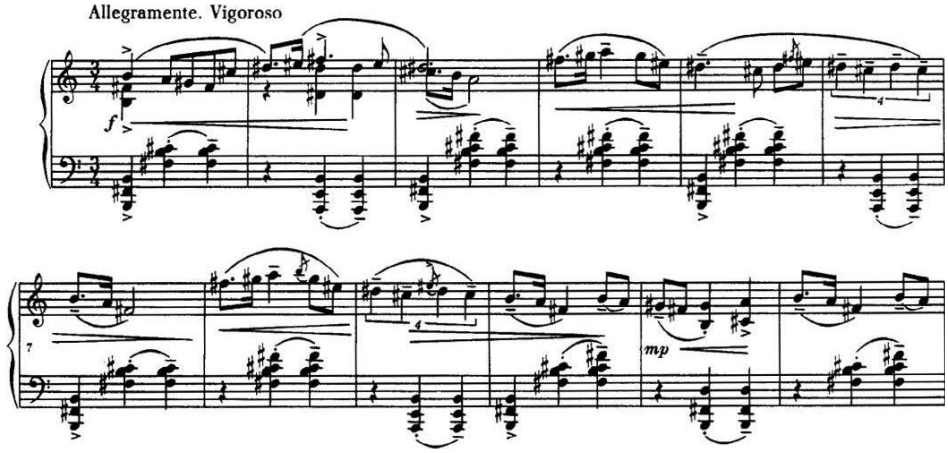


Mazurka no. 16 *Allegramente. Vigoroso*

This is one of the most exuberant, Góral-infused pieces of music in the collection. Although the influence of Podhale music is undeniable, the opening

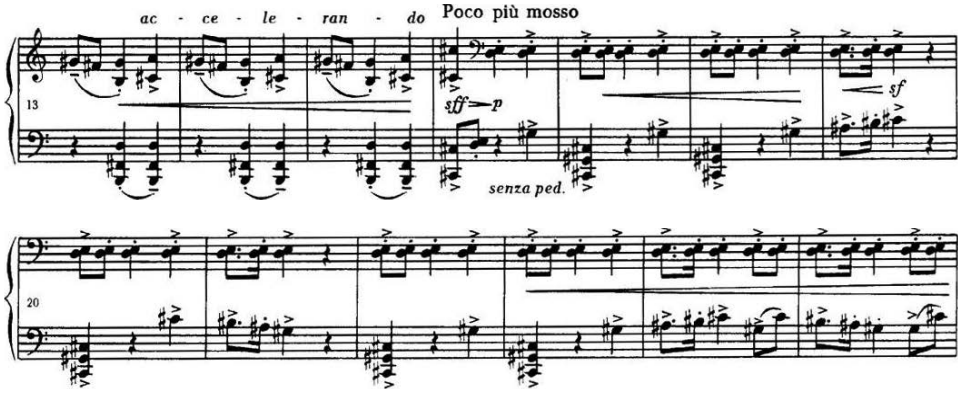
phrase seems to be a transposition of Chopin's *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 1 to one of the Góral modes. In fact, the first two measures are identical with the rhythmic structure of the Chopin composition. The seven-measure opening phrase and the use of four quarter notes in 3/4 time clearly demonstrates the influence of Podhale music. This contributes to a tricky and unconventional rhythmic structure. The task is made even more difficult by the constant leaps within the accompaniment patterns of the left hand, and the large chords in both hands.

Example 188. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 16; mm. 1–12



The original Podhale dance begins in mm. 16–27, based on a sharp, accented ostinato pattern.

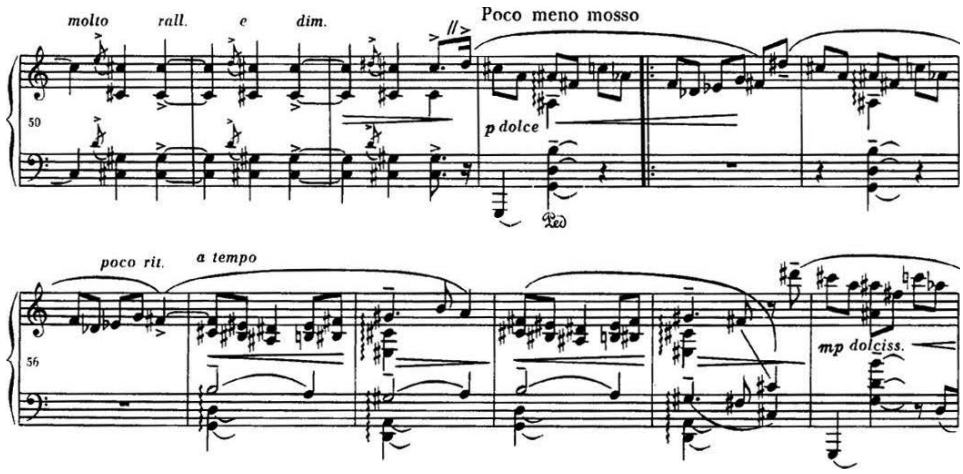
Example 189. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 16; mm. 13–25



The following section (mm. 28–37) is also a Podhale dance, and utilizes a reverse dotted rhythm and slurred, sharply accented octaves. An additional leaping accompaniment pattern for the left hand is also employed here. Measures 38–52 demonstrate a further example of unison technique.

The B section (mm. 53–72), on the other hand, is written in an improvisatory style, and seems once again to not agree with the 3/4 time signature. The music feels a bit awkward as a result, especially as the performer tries to adhere to the mazurka character. In fact, it is fairly pointless, if not impossible, to find traces of a Lowland dance in this section. The multi-voiced layers, extensive chords, and conflicting phrase structure make this section extremely complicated to perform.

E x a m p l e 190. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 16; mm. 50–61



The *Mazurka* displays symmetry, both in form (A= 52; B = 20; A′ = 52) and in micro-organization. The outer sections illustrate the "mirror" principle in phrase structure, built upon a 15 + 22 + 15 form, with the micro-organization being 7 + 8 + 11 + 11 + 8 + 7. This is one of the most beautifully crafted compositions, and also one of the longest and most orchestral dances of the set.

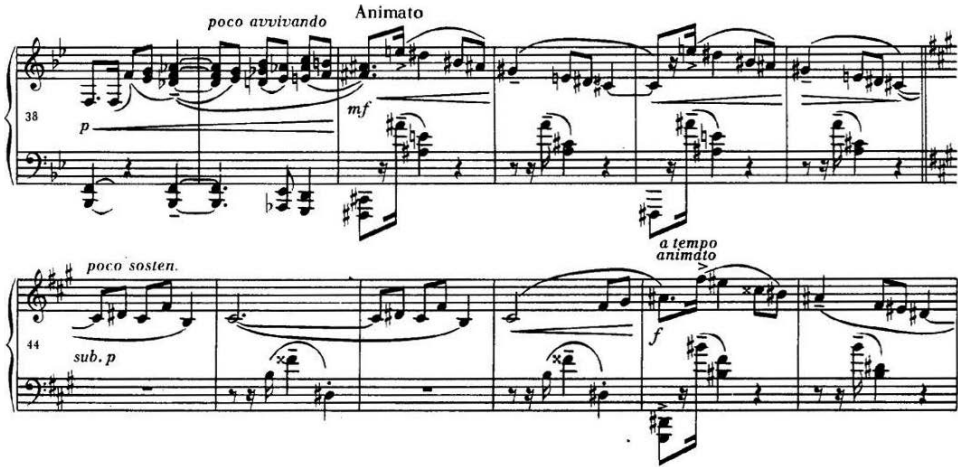
Book V: *Mazurkas* Nos. 17–18

Dedicated to Henryk Toeplitz, who was a writer
and a friend of the composer

Mazurka no. 17 *Moderato*

Once again, Szymanowski treats us to a multi-voiced setting in which the accompaniment pattern is fixed, yet independent. The proximity of the lines, confined within less than two octaves, poses the challenge of clearly defining their individuality. There is a leap within the accompaniment pattern (mm. 40–42) that exceeds three octaves and that needs to be accomplished within a sixteenth note rest.

Example 191. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 17; mm. 38–49



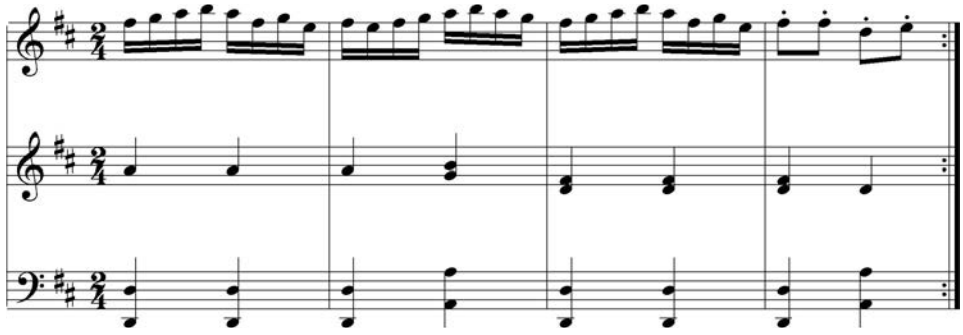
Despite the multi-layered opening, this *Mazurka* is largely a modest, and mostly homophonic composition organized symmetrically (A = 25; B = 35; A′ = 25). This symmetry, however, is not featured in the micro-organization.

Mazurka no. 18 *Vivace. Agitato (Tempo oberka)*

Szymanowski calls for an *Oberka tempo* in this mazurka, clearly indicating the source of inspiration for this piece, but despite this pointed reference he deviates somewhat from its namesake. While displaying some similarities with the

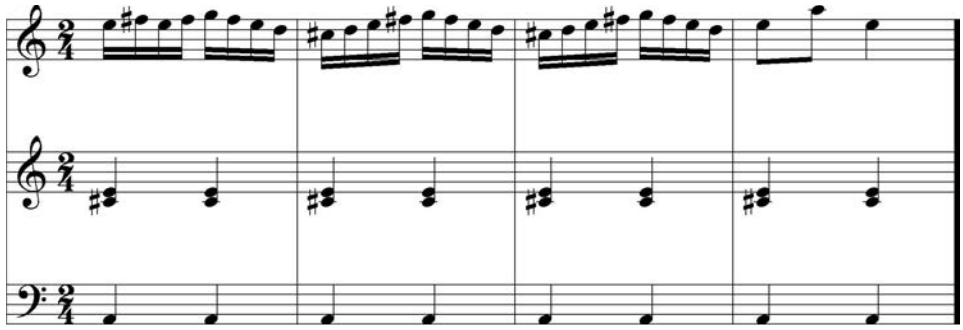
Oberek, the harsh and driven character of this piece reminds one more of the *Krzesany* dance; observe the parallels between *Krzesany Marysuniański* from Mierczyński's collection and Szymanowski's *Mazurka* no. 18.

E x a m p l e 192. Mierczyński, *Krzesany Marysuniański*

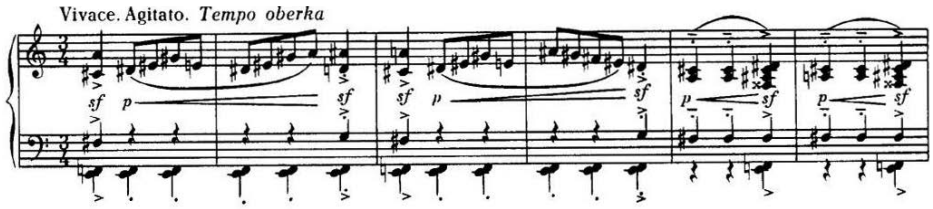


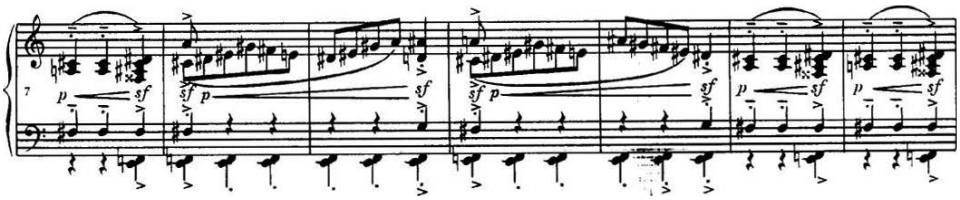
Or *Krzesany Po Razie* no. 3 from the Kotoński collection:

E x a m p l e 193. Kotoński, *Krzesany Po Razie* no. 3



E x a m p l e 194. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 18; mm. 1–13





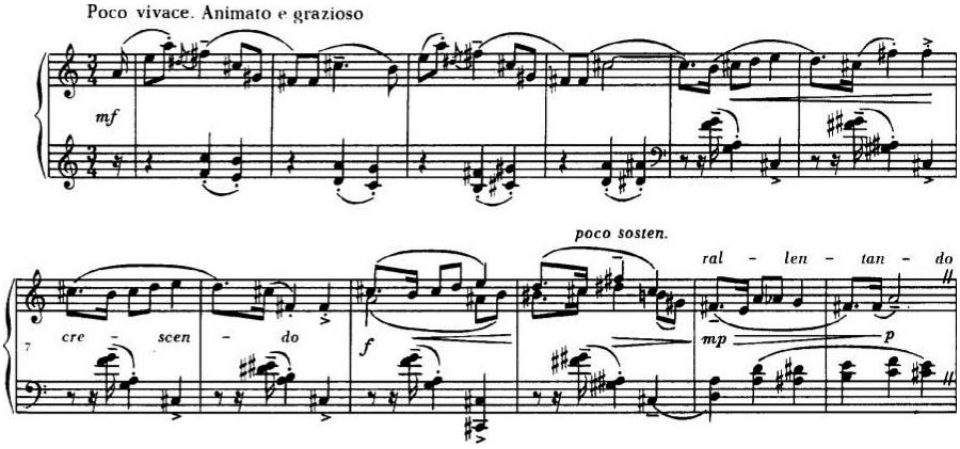
No. 18 is one of the fastest and most driven compositions of the set. For an effective performance, the pianist should focus on planning the climaxes and shaping the accents in such a way that the drive of the dance does not turn monotonous. This is not easy to achieve, since nearly the entire composition is based on repetition. It is also crucial to arrive at an appropriate tempo for the dance, one that will allow all the details of the articulation and dynamics to come to the fore without sacrificing the momentum of the dance. Oddly enough, the perfect ABA′ (49–55–49) + Coda (7) design is once again built upon a mixture of regular and irregular phrase structures. As was the case in *Mazurka* no. 12, the return of the A section brings with it a change in the micro-organization of the phrase structure: the phrases are shifted and reorganized.

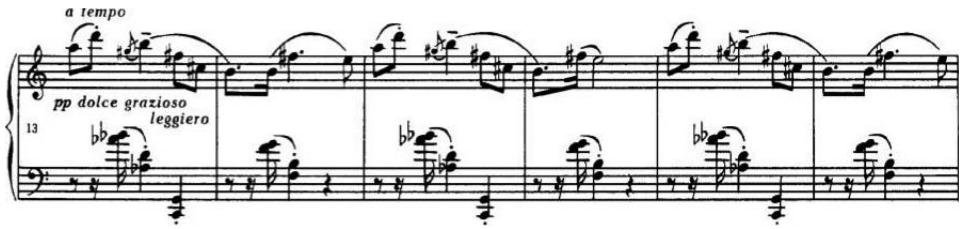
Book V: *Mazurkas* Nos. 19–20

Dedicated to Adolf Chybiński, musicologist and folklorist,
who introduced Szymanowski to Highlander music in 1920

Mazurka no. 19 *Poco vivace. Animato e grazioso*

E x a m p l e 195. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 19; mm. 1–18



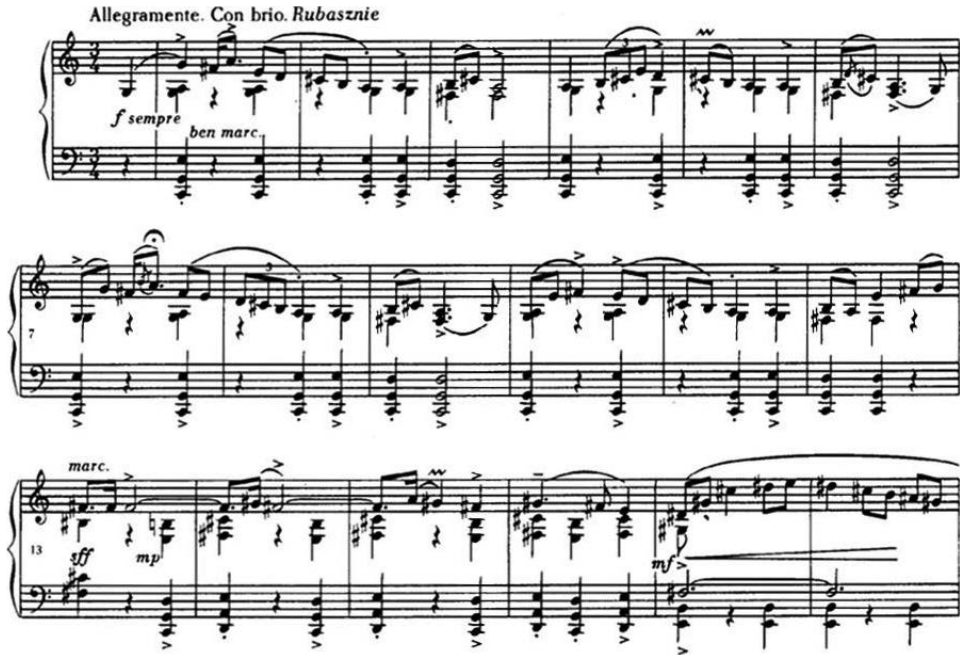


This is the most challenging mazurka with regard to articulation. The opening is full of slurs, accents, and staccato marks that are difficult to execute, in conjunction with the constant shifting of accents from downbeats to weak beats. Large leaps in the accompaniment pattern of the left hand further raise the level of difficulty. The ABA′ (20–22–20) design has an interesting internal structure in which the A section uses an even-phrase rhythm, and the B section is based almost entirely on three-measure phrases. The accompaniment patterns of the left hand are quite challenging; the majority of them are comprised of short and harsh pizzicato sounds. Although this is one of the shortest compositions in the collection, it is certainly not, from the performer's point of view, the easiest of the op. 50 *Mazurkas*.

Mazurka no. 20 *Allegramente. Con brio (Rubasznie)*

The precise execution of the articulation marks is also the key to a successful performance in the case of this *Mazurka*. The profusion of indications, along with a proper understanding of the composer's intentions, *rubasznie* (*boisterously*), are the clues that need to be carefully considered by the performer. Szymanowski adds more ornamentations than ever before. Their faithful execution, combined with wide leaps, large chords, and multi-voiced settings, make this *Mazurka* difficult to perform. The irregular rhythmic pattern, spanning a tenth that is often accented, is not easy to play. This *Mazurka* makes extensive use of the reverse dotted rhythm, of ornamentation, triplets and diverse articulation. It is in an ABA′ (45–45–43) + Coda (14) design, with sections that are almost even in length. The micro-organization of the A and A′ sections is almost identical, and the composition is dominated by an asymmetrical phrase structure that is mostly built on three-measure phrases (5- and 7-measure phrases are also present). The influence of Podhale music is unquestionable in this composition.

Example 196. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 50 no. 20; mm. 1–18



Two Mazurkas op. 62. 1933–1934

The Two Mazurkas op. 62 are the last completed compositions by Karol Szymanowski. They are dedicated to Victor Cazalet, an English music aficionado who purchased them for 100 guineas in 1934. Szymanowski traveled a great deal during this time, and the exact location of their composition is unknown.

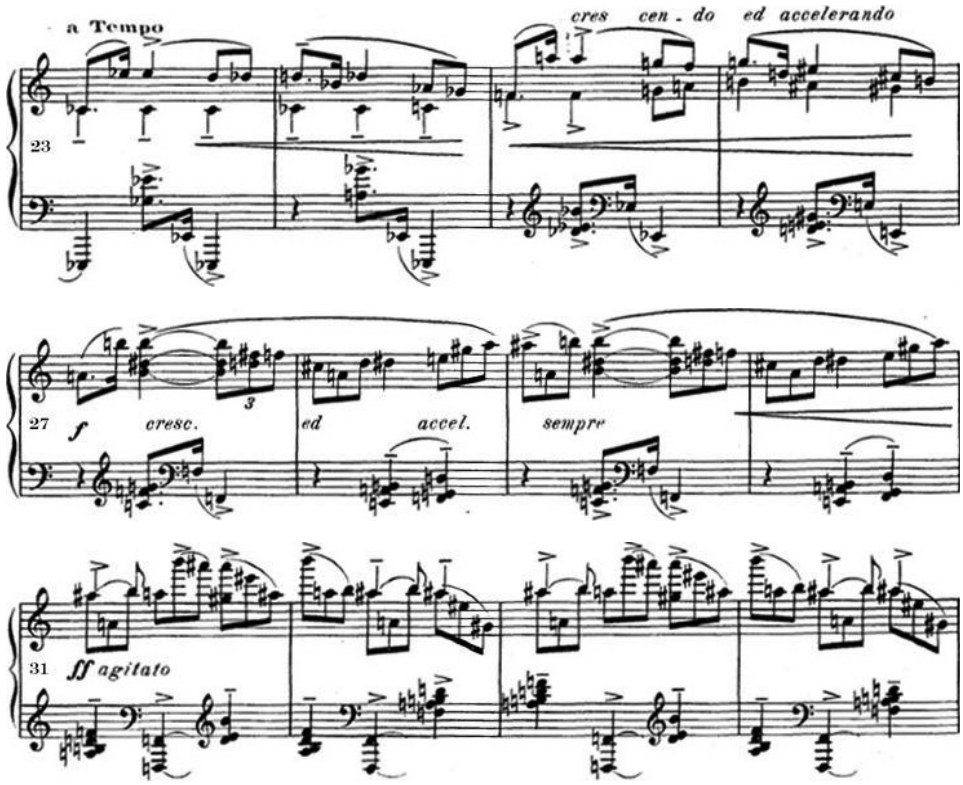
These two *Mazurkas* are the furthest away from the gravitational pull of folk dance and Podhale music. In form they are fairly conventional, with both compositions based on a straightforward ABA′ design.

Mazurka op. 62 no. 1 *Allegretto grazioso*

This is one of the most intensely nostalgic and charming *Mazurkas* ever written. The main challenge here is to weave myriad lines across varied rhythmic structures into a single, delicately flowing melody. The frequent leaps within the accompaniment pattern, and the constant shifting of registers, make the composition demanding. This piece differs from the op. 50 *Mazurkas* due to the *le-*

gato articulation and smoothness of the melodic line and accompaniment patterns, and the lack of the harshness and drive that informs Podhale music and many of the op. 50 *Mazurkas*. This *Mazurka*, along with first *Mazurka* of op. 50, are the only two compositions in op. 50 and 62 that are exclusively based on a symmetrical two- or four-measure phrase structure. This composition is based on a symmetrical design with A = 22; B = 34; A′ = 22.

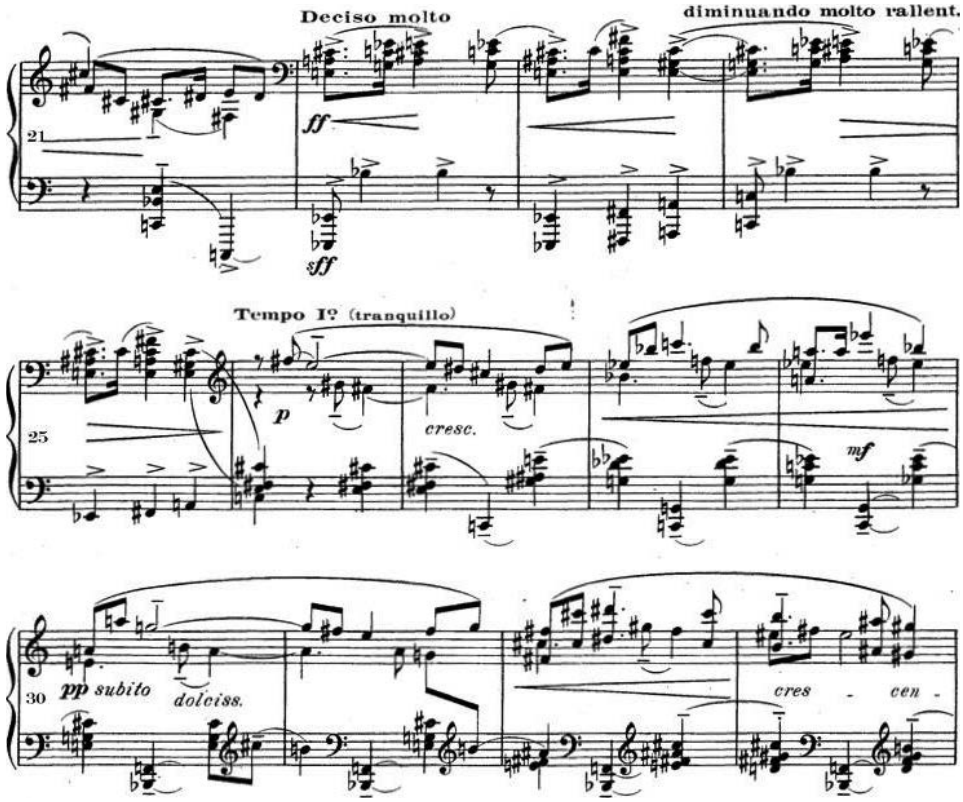
E x a m p l e 197. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 62 no. 1; mm. 23–34



Mazurka op. 62 no. 2 *Moderato*

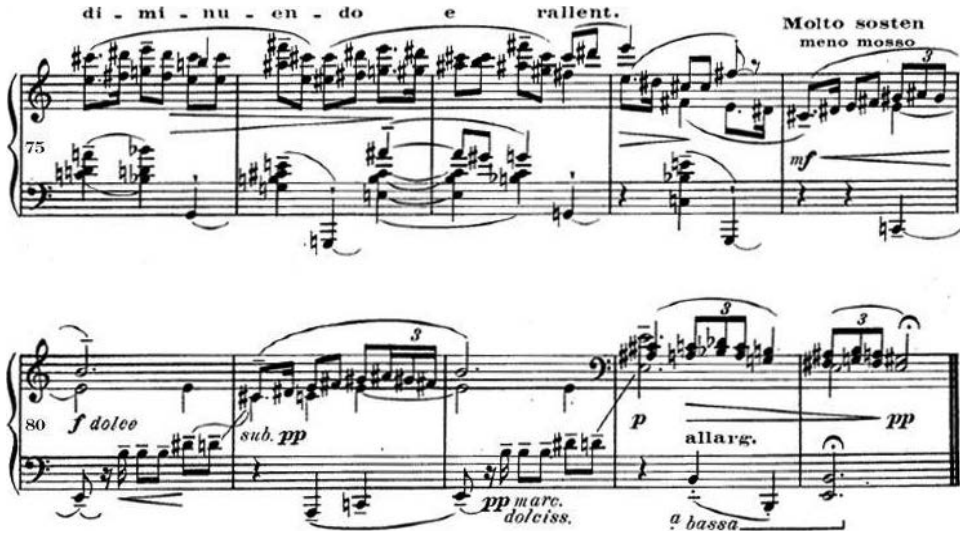
This is the only *Mazurka* among those of op. 50 and op. 62 that extensively uses figuration, including thirty-second notes. It shares complementary characteristics and challenges with *Mazurka* no. 1: leaps in the accompaniment pattern, shifts in registration, and frequent changes in tempo. However, in contrast to no. 1, this piece does reflect some of the harshness of Podhale music at the end of the A section (m. 22), marked by the composer *Deciso molto.*

Example 198. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 62 no. 2; mm. 21–33



Both *Mazurkas* of op. 62, as well as the last four compositions from op. 50, end in a soft dynamic, ranging from *pianissimo* to *pianissimo possible*. It is not unusual for Szymanowski to finish his *Mazurkas* in a soft dynamic, but it is unusual for him to compose six *Mazurkas* in succession that all end *pianissimo* or softer. Perhaps, it was the composer's way of saying goodbye.

E x a m p l e 199. Szymanowski, *Mazurka* op. 62 no. 2; mm. 75–84



Chapter 6

Towards a New Polish Music

Szymanowski's prime ambition was to create a National Polish style through modern means, one that could be relevant beyond the geographic borders of Poland. His music inspired later generations of composers and initiated a movement which brought Polish music back to the international scene.

> Szymanowski was a figure of immense authority among his younger colleagues. He had fought their battles for them, bringing Polish music into the twentieth century virtually single-handedly.[1]

Stefan Jarociński, in *Polish Music,* goes even further in describing the influence of Szymanowski's achievements:

> If any historian of music tried to trace a logical line of development in Polish music in the first three decades of the 20th century (. . .) he would be amazed at the inexplicable gap which would naturally yawn between the works of Paderewski, Karłowicz or Różycki, and the works of those composers whose talents matured between the two World Wars. It is precisely Szymanowski's works that fill this gap, supplying the missing link between the two periods (. . .) Since in Poland [the musical] revolution had its bearing solely and exclusively on Szymanowski's music, and genuinely took place only in him (as he alone made up nearly half a century of our cultural lag), the new composers came, as it were, to a tilled field. They missed the period of *Sturm and Drang* of new music, because they had inherited it all through the experience of Szymanowski in his music.[2]

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[1] Steven Stucky, *Lutosławski and His Music* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 9.
[2] Stefan Jarociński, *Polish Music* (Warsaw: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1965), 171.

Witold Lutosławski and Mikołaj Górecki are two composers, among many others, who owed their early development to Szymanowski's discoveries. Górecki once confessed, "Where Szymanowski went, I went too."[3]

There is a clear connection between the two composers via Górecki's teacher, Szabelski, who had been Szymanowski's pupil. Adrian Thomas summarizes Górecki's relationship with his teacher, noting that

> They shared a profound admiration for the music of Szymanowski.[4]

Later on, he remarked that

> Górecki's proximity to Szymanowski has been a recurrent feature of his career.[5]

Consequently, some of Górecki's early pieces, such as the *Piano Sonata* Op. 6, are clearly inspired by folk music. I am personally puzzled as to why Górecki refuses to acknowledge any connection. He denied any association with Polish folk music during a conversation we had in 1999 at a music festival in Bielsko-Biała. Yet, the connection is striking. Adrian Thomas also points to the unquestionable link:

> The last movement's folk dance (a mazurka with three main themes) pauses towards the end (. . .)[6]

Intriguingly, the Podhale region has become a second home to Górecki, and the place where he spends most of his free time.

> His devotion to the area around Zakopane remained absolute.[7]

His attempts to compose piano *Mazurkas*, which are listed in Thomas's book as unfinished compositions, are well-known, and prove that the composer clearly had some affinity for Polish folk music. The subject of the *Mazurkas* came up during our meeting, and his response was simply, "they are on my desk." I suppose the time has not yet arrived for them.

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[3] Adrian Thomas, *Oxford Studies of Composers: Górecki* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 86.
[4] Thomas, *Górecki,* 1.
[5] Ibid., 111.
[6] Ibid., 5.
[7] Ibid., 115.

Lutosławski's music, although dramatically different from Górecki's, was also inspired by Szymanowski's musical language and evolved from it. He acknowledged that his earlier compositions, *Folk Melodies*, *Bucolics*, *the Silesian Triptych*, *Dance Preludes*, and the *Concerto for Orchestra* were

> based upon folk themes [which] gave me the possibility of developing a style.[8]

Yet, he also denies a lasting involvement with folk music, declaring elsewhere:

> Folk music was only an episode for me.[9]

The political situation at the time may have had something to do with these later retractions. In 1948, the USSR used the Second International Congress of Composers and Musicologists as a platform to introduce new guidelines for creativity and effectively pressured other Socialist Eastern Bloc countries into adopting them. Composers were required to

> renounce 'extreme subjectivism' in favor of expressing the 'aspirations of the popular masses and the progressive ideas of contemporary life', and to turn away from cosmopolitanism towards nationalism. Composers were urged to cultivate the 'concrete' genres – opera, oratorio, cantata, and mass song – and to draw inspiration from folk art.[10]

In the light of this directive, it is easier to accept the composers' conflicting attitude toward folk music. Obviously, they did not want to address all of their music to the masses, as they were obliged to by the government prior to Stalin's death in 1953. Because of the complex political tensions during those times, it is difficult to look back and determine whether it was the composers' free will to use folk music, or whether they were compelled to do so. But as Lutosławki explains, his motives behind composing "functional music" were simple:

> I had to make a living, I had to earn money.[11]

But he quickly adds:

---

[8] Stucky, *Lutosławski*, 45.

[9] Bálint András Varga, *Lutosławski Profile: Witold Lutosławski in Conversation with Bálint András Varga* (London: Chester Music, 1974), 9.

[10] Stucky, *Lutosławski*, 35.

[11] Varga, *Lutosławski Profile*, 8.

> I never wrote anything that would have complied with the official requirements, but I was not adverse to the idea of composing pieces for which there was a social need.[12]

Unquestionably, these political impositions had a negative influence on composers' views of folk music and nationalistic trends. During this creatively restrictive era it is almost impossible to separate and identify the composers' genuine needs and interests in folk music from government requirements. Górecki even contradicts himself with regard to very clear-cut examples such as his *Piano Sonata*, where the presence of folk material is beyond question. Understandably, in today's democratic Poland it is not an advantage for a composer to be seen as having been a propagator of socialism at any time during his career, especially for those active in the 1950s. Fortunately, the unpredictable waxing and waning of political tides during that era did not destroy the genius and influence of Szymanowski's music.

Szymanowski's achievements and ideas also served to inspire some lesser-known composers. Among those who follow his path and continue to incorporate the influences of Podhale music are:

Michał Kondracki – *Mała Symfonia Góralska* (*Small Góral Symphony*)
Artur Malawski – *Wierchy and Triptyk Góralski* (*Góral Trilogy*)
Włodzimierz Kotoński – *Góral Dance*
Grażyna Bacewicz – *Violin Concerto* No. 3 (the second mvt. is based on *Sabała Melody*)
Ludomir Michał Rogowski – *Suita Podhalańska (Podhale Suite)*
Jan Ekier – *Suita Góralska (Góral Suite)*
Lowland folk music:
Kazimierz Sikorski – *Horn Concerto*
Tadeusz Baird – *Small Kurpie Suite*
Andrzej Panufnik – *Sinfonia Rustica*
Roman Maciejewski – *Kurpie Songs, Four Mazurkas*
Michał Kondracki – *Kurpie Suite*
Czesław Marek – *Sinfonia Brevis*

[12] Ibid.

Conclusion

Szymanowski saw folk music as a source of familiarity and rootedness, one that led him to modernity and to a restoration of Polish music at home and abroad. Drawing inspiration from the folk references abundant in the works from Igor Stravinsky's Russian period, Szymanowski infused his own works with the music of his people, stressing the importance of returning to one's own cultural heritage. His friend, the writer Jerzy Rytard, summarizes his and Szymanowski's thoughts about folk music:

> The folk cultures, along with other manifestations of culture, seem to be the ash in which the sparks of past lives lie dormant, but they also represent an enormous energy that has not yet reached the level of consciousness in society.[1]
> (Kultury ludowe, w łącznosci z całokształtem kultury, ukazują się zarówno jako popiół, w którym drzemią iskry uśpione ślady życia dawnego, ale także jako zapał sił, które dotąd nie znalazły dostępu do kultury świadomej.)
>
> For Szymanowski, folk culture was a part of nature, while at the same time being in constant conflict with it.[2]

This contradiction is expressed in the rough, driven, and dramatically distinct character of Podhale music and Szymanowski's compositions, which no doubt are masterpieces functioning to elevate folk culture into art culture.

The rediscovery and inclusion of Podhale folk material aided Szymanowski in the creation of a new style of music. However, studying and understanding the *góral* music itself was not his goal or sole objective. As with Lutosławski, he

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[1] Jerzy Mieczysław Rytard, *Wspomnienia o Karolu Szymanowskim* [Remembrances of Karol Szymanowski] (Kraków: PWM, 1947), 15.

[2] Rytard, *Wspomnienia*, 16.

aimed to explore novel possibilities and to create a unique style, to seek a new path in music. Szymanowski helped share the wealth of Polish folk music with an international audience. As Szymanowski explains in a 1924 article:

> Our music must recover its age-old rights: absolute freedom, and complete liberation from the yoke of "yesterday's" norms and precepts of creativity. Let us be nation-oriented in the cultivation of our ethnic peculiarities, but let this nationalism aspire without fear to that state in which its elevated values become all-embracing (. . .) Let all streams springing from universal art mingle freely with ours: may they impregnate, differentiate and transform it in accordance with its particular attributes. We ought not to lose organic connection with universal culture, because it is only on such a plane that a truly great, living art, including nationalistic music, can flourish. (…) We once possessed precisely this type of music in the work of Chopin.[3]
>
> (Muzyka nasza musi odzyskać odwieczne swe prawa: bezwzględnej wolności, zupełnego wyzwolenia z jarzma stworzonych 'wczoraj' norm i nakazów (. . .) Niech będzie 'narodowa" w rasowej swej odrębności, niech jednak dąży bez lęku tam, gdzie wznoszone przez nią wartości stają się już ogólnoludzkimi; niech będzie narodowa, lecz nie prowincjonalna. Niech wszelkie prądy, rodzące się w sztuce wszechludzkiej, swobodnie przepływają i przez naszą, niech ją przesycają, i przetwarzają w zależności od jej swoistych właściwości. (…) A posiadaliśmy ją już – niegdyś – w twórczości Fryderyka Chopina.)

Although his ambition was clear, it was not easy to accomplish. While he yearned to create music that was rooted in tradition and national identity, it also needed to aspire toward the future. A synthesis of folk material and the innovative trends as exemplified by *Die Neue Sachlichkeit*, the *Mazurkas* op. 50 and 62 stand as an example of the successful fusion of tradition with modernity.

[3] Karol Szymanowski, *Pisma muzyczne* [Musical writings], ed. Kornel Michałowski, vol. I, (Kraków: PWM, 1984), 44–45.

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Embracing Folk Material and Finding the New Objectivity: Karol Szymanowski's Twenty Mazurkas Op. 50 and Two Mazurkas Op. 62

Summary

This book examines the presence of folk material in and the influence of the New Objectivity on the *Mazurkas* op. 50 and op. 62 by Karol Szymanowski through various elements: rhythmic patterns, form, proportions, phrase structure, texture, accompaniment patterns, and articulation. Special emphasis is placed on the influence of the folk music practiced in the Highland region of the Tatra Mountains and its unquestionable presence in the *Mazurkas.* This dissertation dispenses with an analysis of the tonal system in the *Mazurkas*, a topic extensively covered in a thesis by Ann Kossakowski (Yale University, 1980).

Chapter 1 discusses stylistic differences in Szymanowski's works prior to the 1920s and beyond, as well as general trends in European music of that period. Chapter 2 focuses on the New Objectivity movement which is exemplified by the return to traditional forms and textures. Found in the works of Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Hindemith, this new trend represents the search for a new direction reflective of Baroque and Classical models. The subsequent chapter is devoted exclusively to Polish folk music with distinctions drawn between Lowland and Highland folk styles and draws upon various examples of folk dances and songs.

The main body of the book begins in Chapter 4, which is devoted to the analysis of the *Mazurkas.* A close look at the individual elements of the compositions highlights the remarkable way in which Szymanowski's music manifests the New Objectivity in its texture, clear phrase structure, symmetrical proportions, and the rhythmic unity achieved through irregular accents typical of folk music.

Chapter 5 explores the interpretive challenges a performer faces in the *Mazurkas* and examines each composition individually, analyzing the character and function of key elements: rhythmic patterns, articulation, and especially *rubato*.

Szymanowski's influence on modern Polish music and his contribution to later generations cannot be overstated and is the subject matter of the last chapter, followed by a summation in the conclusion.

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